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WESTMINSTER BRIDGE, "BIG BEN"
AND THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT. *Page 52.*

PEEPS AT GREAT CITIES

LONDON

BY

G. E. MITTON

JOINT AUTHOR WITH SIR WALTER BESANT OF "THE FASCINATION OF LONDON"

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ARMS OF THE CITY OF LONDON.

LONDON

CHAPTER I

LONDON FROM THE RIVER

Supposing someone said to you, "I will take you by water to London ; we will go up the River Thames in a steamer, and we will not only visit London, but go right through the middle of it," it would sound a most attractive invitation, would it not ?

It really would be quite possible, too ; but, in case it never falls to your lot to make this delightful trip, I will tell you exactly what you would see, so that at any rate you can imagine you have been.

Coming up the river from the mouth for the first sixty miles you would see nothing of London at all, and when you began to reach the outskirts, the farthest eastern part, you would not find it very interesting. Glimpses of tall masts or funnels behind houses would puzzle you, no doubt, for it actually looks sometimes as if the ships which carry these things must be in the streets, but they are really in great docks or basins of water, built to hold them while they are being loaded or repaired. At one place, just where the river makes a great loop southward, doubling up again in a complete

horseshoe, some of these docks, called the West India Docks, have been made right across the strip of land joining the two ends of the horseshoe, so that there is a short cut by water ; steamers, however, cannot use this as a passage way, such a thing would not for a moment be allowed. Docks are not built for that purpose. No, we in our steamer must pass right round the horseshoe, which encloses a piece of land called the Isle of Dogs. The story goes that very, very many years ago, the hunting-dogs of the Kings of England were kept here, and thus the name arose.

It is very likely that this is true, because, on the other side of the river, almost at the extreme end of the horseshoe, is Greenwich, where once stood one of the royal palaces inhabited by our Kings and Queens. Henry VIII. and all his children, Edward, Mary, and Elizabeth, lived here in turn, but of the palace they occupied not a vestige is left. It was from Greenwich that the boy-King, Edward VI., waved farewell to the gallant men going forth on the very first Arctic expedition. The King was sixteen at the time, a delicate, thoughtful boy. He had been very ill, but just then—it was in the month of May, 1553—he showed signs of being better, so he sat at the window surrounded by all his courtiers, gay in the silks and satins and velvets which were then worn, to see Sir Hugh Willoughby and his brave comrades pass slowly down with the tide toward the west. They were in three ships, mere fishing boats we should call them now ; the largest was only 160 tons, and the smallest 90 tons. They were not in the least like our steamers, for they rose high out

of the water at each end, with rows and rows of port-holes one above the other, and dipped down in the middle, while a medley of ropes and masts soared up into the air from the tiny decks.

Edward took a particularly keen interest in geography, which was to him a living thing, not merely dry stuff to be learned from books, and no doubt his pale face lighted with eagerness as he saw the *Bona Esperanza* (Good Hope), the *Bona Ventura* (Good Venture) and the *Bona Confidentia* (Good Confidence) go down the river. Two months later he died, long before any news of the fate of the expedition was brought back to England.

The palace was completely rebuilt, and is now the Royal Naval College for officers of the Navy. Above it rise the slopes of Greenwich Park, and high above all the Observatory, the most important in the world, because from it the degrees around the world are reckoned. You know that degrees are measured by imaginary lines reaching from pole to pole of the earth.

It is plain, of course, that as the world is round there must be some fixed point selected from which to make a start, so the imaginary line or degree which passes through Greenwich was chosen as No. 0, and from it all degrees are counted to the east or to the west. It is quite fitting that the greatest city in the world should have passing through her the degree from which all degrees are measured.

We have not fairly reached London yet, but we are approaching from the east end, which is the busy com-

mercial part, as is natural, because it is nearest to the sea. On the north side of us, or the right hand as we make our way up, lies by far the greater part of London, the best-known part, where are the city and almost all the principal buildings ; to the south or left hand lies, first, near the river, a poor district, and behind that far-reaching suburbs stretching out to the Crystal Palace. This part of London covers miles of ground ; it has wide open spaces and is inhabited by better-class people, who prefer to be a little away from the thickest part of the great city.

The river runs through London from end to end, but it is not straight, winding about very much in its course, and making great turns in places. You may imagine London lying on each side of it something in the shape of a great egg, and if you drew an irregular pencil line from end to end of the egg that would represent the river. As we go along we shall see miles and miles of squalid buildings bordering the river, with here and there a fine well-built one to break the dingy line ; we shall see docks and wharves and bridges of all sorts and kinds. There are actually fourteen bridges lying in the London area without counting those which only carry railways. We shall see towered and spired churches rising up amid the houses, and, principal sight of all, the great dome of St. Paul's, which seems to swing about as our steamer turns with the windings of the river.

As we round the last curve and leave the Isle of Dogs, we come first into the Lower and then the Upper Pool, so called because the river widens out into

greater breadth. Here, there is always a busy and animated scene. The houses are built sheer on to the water like a line of cliffs ; on each story, instead of windows, there are doors, like barn-doors, into which the stuff from the ships can easily be taken ; below, in the river, lie ships of every sort and size, from hideous little fussy things like iron kettles to great huge hulks, no less hideous, and also of black iron. Gone are the days of high-carved prows, graceful tapering masts and bellying white sails ; the cleanest and neatest thing to be seen is our own steamer, with her decks scrubbed white and her brass-work shining.

Great cranes are stretching out long arms from the ships or from the open doors overhead, and goods are being conveyed up into the warehouses from the water continuously, while men toil and grow hot, and shout, amid the whirr of the winches and the shrieking of steam whistles. Food to feed the people of London is coming in by the ton ; here is a ship laden with nothing but tea ; there is another filled with potatoes ; sugar, cocoa, wine, and tobacco are all good cargoes, but these may not be delivered straightway, for most of these articles have to pay duty to the Government before they can be sold in England. For the purpose of seeing that nothing escapes, there exists the fine Custom-house, a little way farther up, where live Government officials who search out the ships' cargoes, and make the owners pay the right amount of duty according to law.

In the river-way the traffic is incessant ; some ships are making their way up to the Custom-house ; barges,

large, low-lying, clumsy things carrying top-heavy loads of hay or coal, with their sides all awash in the water, are going up also with the tide. There is a man standing at the front end, and with an immense oar, called a sweep, he assists their progress. Behind the first is a row of other barges, one fastened to the other like a row of railway carriages, and on them sit sunburnt, gipsy-like men and women, whose whole lives are spent on board. The tiny little cabin, a few feet each way, is the only place they have for eating, dressing, and sleeping, and when they are not busy loading or unloading, their time is spent sitting on the edge of the barge and gliding on from place to place. In great contrast to the barges are the quick little boats of the water-police, which dart here, there and everywhere, propelled by the even strokes of a smart crew. They search into every hole and corner like a terrier looking for rats. There is very little that escapes the notice of the river-police.

Seagulls wheel and scream overhead, swooping down on the refuse thrown from boats and barges, and getting a fat living with very little trouble. Amid all this a small steamer filled with goods, plies up and down, serving the purpose of a floating general shop. She does a good trade too, for her owner is clever at bargaining with the brown-faced sailormen who lean over the high hulls, up which the purchases must be handed.

It is quite probable, amid all the many objects around, that you will see a dredger which looks like an ugly iron castle ; it is busy scraping up mud by the ton

from the channel of the river, and then it carries it out to sea ; it is continuously at work, for the tides bring in the mud, and if it were not for dredging, the channel would get shallower and shallower from year to year, to the great disadvantage of the shipping.

There are plenty of boats to be hired, if you wish, with boatmen who are licensed as cabmen are—that is to say, given permission to ply for hire ; their charges are strictly regulated, and no man can demand more than the price fixed ; while, if a man were rude or uncivil, his licence would be taken away.

To anyone with imagination the Pool of London cannot fail to be fascinating ; here come ships from all quarters of the world. On that steamer, maybe, are four castaways, all that remain of a flourishing crew that went forth gaily over a year ago in a ship of their own. Their ship was burnt in mid-ocean, and they took to the boats, and at last reached an island where they hungered and thirsted in the weariness of hope deferred for many weeks, until at last they were seen by another steamer which took them off and brought them home, and they land now dressed in such clothes as their comrades have been able to scrape together for them ; all their personal possessions are gone, and the wives at home maybe are thinking that they are dead.

Here steps ashore a sailor-man who has come from the tropical countries where the palms wave grandly over sunlit beaches and the air is full of the perfume of spice. He carries under his jacket a shivering little monkey, so quick in its movements it looks as if it were made of wires. Its bright eyes glance this way

and that, up to the face of the sailor who has shared his food with it on the homeward way, and again to the crowded street in which he sets foot. He is taking it to sell. It tears his heart to part with it, but he will have to be off again and away, and he knows it will be well looked after if he can get Jamrach to buy it.

Let us hire one of those boats we spoke of and go ashore too, and follow him.

Of all the queer places in London Jamrach's is one of the queerest! For over one hundred and fifty years the shop has been where it stands now in a narrow, dull street close to the docks. For all that time, father, son, and grandson succeeding, have made a trade in strange wild animals and weird trophies picked up in all parts of the world. The position of Jamrach's (a great advantage to the owner of the shop) is so easy for the newly landed sailors to go to ; anyone who has a queerly carved native stick can find his way there and get the price without any trouble. There is little indeed that Jamrach refuses, and if you ask who are the customers who buy these things, why, the leading animal fanciers all over Europe. There is no need for the owner to worry about his sales. People come to him, and would come still were he ten times more difficult to find.

The shop is very small, and the smell and noise of the animals makes it difficult for us to stand there patiently. Innumerable birds twitter in cages, a gorgeous parrot with a beak like a scythe makes a wild endeavour to slash at you as you pass, and various little scuttering timid creatures watch you with interest. The sailor

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THE POOL OF LONDON. *Page 4.*

soon completes his bargain about his monkey, and hands it over, and the little thing, quieted by a juicy date, looks up with confidence to its new keeper. It has never been unkindly treated by man since it was taken from its dead mother's side, and it has no reason to fear him. There are many other monkeys to note the new arrival and jibber at it from their cages, and two dainty little gazelles sniff at it in curiosity as it is carried past them. From outside the melancholy baa-ing of some small Siberian sheep comes in at the dingy window.

Passing through tiny passages, thick with dust, and down unexpected steps and narrow entries, we come to another room filled from floor to ceiling with treasures, some of them almost priceless, and all covered with dust and many with cobwebs hanging like shawls upon them. Take care where you step, or you may put your foot into a fifteen guinea plate. Those tall blue vases of an exquisite colour, as tall as you, came from China, and no doubt form part of the spoil after the sack of the palace in the Boxer troubles. Then with a start you see a hideous ruddy face grinning close to yours ; it is a weirdly carved wooden mask, stained with herbs, from some golden island far away in the Pacific, where men wear such things in mad cannibal dances. A mighty idol heavy as lead glowers at you, seeming to be wishing evil to each and all of those who have brought it and keep it here, from the man who went one night and stole it from its temple in the dense tropical jungle, carrying it off in a clumsy, creaking ox-cart, to the child who innocently touches it here in England. Some of those wicked-looking spears are stained red, and not

with rust. They were very likely picked up from the dead after some savage battle between neighbouring tribes ; possibly a ship put in to get water at one of the beautiful islands of the Pacific, and found these things lying around amid the dead bodies in the great stillness that had followed the fight, and a sailor, thinking he might make something out of them, brought them home just as they were.

Those carved ivory daggers have certainly been used ; they must have belonged to high nobles in Japan. No commoner could afford to possess a dagger like that ; maybe this was one of those used by the owner to kill himself by the command of the Emperor, for in Japan, when a man of high birth was condemned to die, he had the privilege of carrying out his own execution ! These charms are said to bring luck ; they were blessed by a priest who professed to have learned strange secrets hidden from common men, and certainly some of the magic he performed could not be understood by white men.

There are shrivelled shells of crabs and dried skins of starfish lying on plates of exquisite porcelain ; moth-eaten forms of stuffed animals fill the air with a kind of choking dust. All at once in the gathering gloom something clutches us behind, and we start in terror, thinking some wicked creature has come to life, but it is only a coquettish little cat, who runs along underneath a shelf and catches us with her claws. She is happy here ; mice and rats abound, and the weird mystery of it all just suits a cat ; she desires no happier home. But to us the air is full of menace and

evil ; the atmosphere of these things speak of blood and crime and vice, and we are glad to get into the good clean air outside and blow off the feeling of it all on the deck of our river-steamer.

Now we catch sight of the Tower Bridge, and I should not be at all surprised if someone were to exclaim, "Is this the gate of London?" Well it might be, so tall and splendid is it standing up against the sky, a worthy entrance to a mighty city! The bridge has two towers, one on each side. They rise to a great height, and are joined by two bridges, one high up and the other low down on the level of the roadway. The higher one can only be reached by steps, so that if people want to cross that way they must climb up inside one of the towers. Across the other passes all the traffic—cabs, omnibuses, carts, and drays. This one is so low over the water that large steamers cannot get underneath. So when a large steamer comes up and sounds her steam-whistle to show she wants to pass, the man in charge of the bridge rings a bell ; then all the traffic runs off one way or the other, and presently a crack can be seen right across the centre of the roadway, midway between the two towers, and it widens as the two halves of the bridge rise slowly, each with one end high in the air ; thus they remain until the steamer passes between. If you join your finger-tips in front, and then let your hands swing up, keeping your elbows fixed, you will get some idea of what it looks like on a small scale.

On our right, just beyond the bridge, lies the Tower, where many stories belonging to the history of England were played out. The irregular grey towers can be

seen through the young trees in front, but we must not linger by the Tower now, for we shall come back and visit it when we have more time.

Before we reach the next bridge we pass the splendid frontage of the Custom-house, with a broad quay in front, on which are seats for the public. Generally there are a number of ships clustered about this important place, and the building is quite worthy of the proud position it holds. Close to it is Billingsgate Fish Market, through which by far the greater part of the fish which supplies London is received, though of course quantities come in by rail also. Billingsgate always smells of the sea. The market is like a great open hall or barn, and both the floor and the stalls are generally soaking wet. Lumps of seaweed lie about on the slabs, and many of the poor lobsters are alive and crawling helplessly about trying to find their way back to that salt water from which so unaccountably they have been taken. Their long whiskers are waggling and their goggle eyes turning this way and that, but no one takes any heed of them, or cares for the troubles of a lobster. The shellfish are just as important a part of the market as the soft fish, and baskets of crabs, mussels, cockles and oysters, which have been ruthlessly torn from the rocks which were their homes, are standing here and there, and there is every sort of sea-fish you could name, and a great many you wouldn't know. Cod, turbot, halibut, ling, plaice, whiting, down to tiny little smelts, are found in season. The turbot are the prizes of the fishing-smacks, bringing in far the most money to their lucky owners. The sizes of the fish are so different that it is almost

ridiculous to call a monster cod and a tiny smelt both alike fish!

Private people do not come to the market. It is visited by salesmen who buy in large quantities early in the morning, and carry back the fish to the shops, which sell them again to their customers, and the difference between the price the shopman pays in the market and the price at which he sells to his own customers constitutes his living. The market is very lively, for the sellers keep up a perpetual cry, "Haddock and cod, come buy, come buy! Fine fresh lobsters and crabs all alive, alive-oh! Here you are, finest you can get! All this lot for ten shillings! Whiting and turbot—shrimps is it? The very best are here. Come buy, come buy!" and with everyone thus shouting and trying to attract attention to their own wares the noise is overwhelming. At one time Billingsgate had a bad name, for the sellers were the very lowest people, and the bad language was awful, but now all that is changed, and anyone could quite safely visit the market if they cared to get up early.

Outside, there are some rough-looking men, standing beside some huge padded things, which look like horse-collars. These are porters, and the collars are for putting on their heads and shoulders when they carry the fish away. Rough as the porters look they would all be quite civil if spoken to. By ten o'clock or so in the morning the market will be quite empty, all the fish sold off, and only those who sweep out the place and wash it down will be left.

The next bridge under which we pass is London

Bridge, and so many and interesting are the stories that cluster around London Bridge we must leave it alone like the Tower at present, and come back to it again. The present bridge is not old, but it is pleasant to look at, with long flat arches built of white stone. Once we get beyond it a very hideous and curious thing comes into sight, an immense black dome or roof which rises so high that it blocks out some of the sky. What can this be? It is in fact Cannon Street Station, the outside of it, the great glass roofs, which, covered with grime and dirt, rise up in so striking a fashion. Now, Cannon Street is only one of many stations in London, and has no special message for us, but the place where it stands is very interesting, for it was just hereabouts that the City of London first began as a tiny settlement.

CHAPTER II

THE CITY AND THE EMBANKMENT

The City of London is just one special small part lying like the kernel in a nut within greater London, and when we speak of the City of London with a capital, it is this part we mean, but when we say, "London is a mighty city," we are speaking of the whole of London, which spreads out for something like thirteen miles in one direction and ten in another. The City is only one square mile in size, and within it the Lord Mayor is supreme. He is like a little King, and he reigns for one year only. While he is in office he entertains foreign royalties, who come to visit him as an equal,

and if the King of England happens to visit the City in state the Lord Mayor meets him at the entrance and hands him the keys. Every November a new Lord Mayor is chosen with much pomp and ceremony, and the old one falls back into being a private citizen again. The City runs from the Tower, which we have already passed, to Temple Bar, the position of which we shall note as we go on upstream.

Old as London is, there must have been a time when there was no London, when all the part now covered with streets and houses was just open country. At that time the Thames extended much farther on each side than it does now, spreading low and flat over a large extent of ground, and beyond it was swamp and marsh, reaching to ranges of hills both on the north and on the south. Close by the place where Cannon Street Station now is there was at one time a rushing stream falling down from the heights through the marshy ground into the river, and on each side of it rose a cliff-like place, high and steep. It occurred to some ancient Briton who made his living on the shores of the Thames by trapping wild animals, snaring birds, and netting fish, that one of these cliffs or hills would make a good place on which to settle. While there he could not be approached by enemies from the front because of the broad river which protected him, nor from the side because of the stream, called later the Walbrook, which rushed down steeply to join the river. As the marshes lay to the north at his back, he could feel fairly safe, even in those days when savage men wandered freely about seeking what they might steal. This first man was no doubt

presently joined by his friends, who saw the wisdom of his choice. They, like himself, wore skins of wild animals and lived in wicker-work huts daubed over with clay to keep out the wind. Their boats were also of wicker-work covered with skins, and danced lightly as down upon the water. So the earliest settlement of London began.

When the Romans came they must have found quite a large colony near the river, because the Britons had actually begun to trade with France, then called Gaul, and the Gauls brought goods up by water to exchange for the skins and furs and tin and grain the Britons could give them.

The Romans conquered the Britons without much difficulty and themselves settled down upon the cliffs near the Thames. They chose, however, the other side of the Walbrook from that on which the first Britons had built their huts, and they established there a fort very strong and substantial, much stronger than anything the Britons could build. From this began the Roman city which soon spread far to the north and around. The Romans quickly found that a bridge was necessary to cross the water, and it was they who built the first London Bridge, choosing the narrowest part of the river not far from their own settlement for the purpose. Beside the bridge the Romans built the wall which made London into a city, but except for a few fragments the wall has vanished. There is a large fragment in the churchyard of St. Giles', Cripplegate, and another near the Tower; in fact, a breach was made in the wall to enable the Tower to be built, but of the wall itself as a

ST. PAUL'S FROM THE RIVER. *Page 22.*

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continuous whole nothing remains. The Romans called London Augusta, and 400 years after they had first settled there they went away back to their own country.

When the Romans had gone the Anglo-Saxons came next, and eventually they settled in London ; later they were conquered by the Danes, who in their turn occupied London. All this is a matter of history, which you must have read. It was King Alfred, as you know, who beat back the Danes and made himself in reality King of England, and it was Alfred who did much for London. He restored the bridge, and rebuilt the wall where it had fallen or been broken down ; also he built many of the London churches, and restored the prosperity of the City. After Alfred's death the Danes came again, and a Danish King, Canute, ruled in England, and ruled wisely and well too. When England was at last settled under the Norman Kings, London continued to be the capital of the Kingdom, and grew in power and trade. As greater security was felt in the land, houses were built outside the walls in what were called the Liberties of the City, and these Liberties are still included in the City and form a part of it. So, when we speak of the City, it is not only that part which was once enclosed by the wall, but a bit beyond on all sides. But in time, as the houses grew and grew, no more of London belonged to the City, the boundaries of which are very peculiar. The whole City is divided into wards, which are to it as counties are to England ; the wards which lie inside the line of the old wall are called the wards Within and those outside are the wards Without, but both together form the City.

Various Kings from time to time passed laws forbidding the building of more houses, because they feared there would be difficulty in feeding so many people massed together; but nobody took much notice, and the building went merrily on, until to-day London is the largest city the world has ever known.

In the centre of the City there is an open space from which no less than seven principal streets radiate like the rays of a star. Here we find several very important buildings; it is, in fact, the heart of the City. First there is the Mansion House, which is the home of the Lord Mayor, and is occupied by each Lord Mayor during his year of office. Many gorgeous entertainments he gives there—luncheons and dinners and parties, but none so delightful as the children's fancy-dress ball, which, to the lucky children who are invited, is the event of the year. Over a thousand children in costume attend, and the feature of the evening is the march past the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress, when all the beautiful dresses can be seen to advantage. Gallant courtiers walk with milkmaids, golliwogs escort cooks, there are dozens of queens, and kings, and judges, and nobles; Sir Walter Raleigh smiles at "Mary, Mary quite contrary," and John Bull flirts with Canada; Napoleon is always present, though not always represented by the same boy, and little Miss Moffat seldom misses. There is an unfailing supply of Dick Whittingtons, for a Lord Mayor's ball would not be complete without Dick.

Do you know the story of Dick Whittington? Very many centuries ago a ragged boy, without food to eat,

and with only rags to cover him, came to London, and as he was sitting dismally in the street, he was seen by a merchant, who took him into his house and made him his scullion, to wash up pots and pans. The boy, Dick Whittington, was of a quick and willing disposition, and did his best, but his life was not easy. For one thing, the kitchenmaid used to beat and abuse him, and found fault with him in everything; and secondly, he slept in a garret so overrun with rats and mice that he could scarcely sleep at nights. Presently, however, someone gave him a penny, and with the penny he bought a cat, and the cat soon rid him of the rats and mice. Now it happened that when the merchant, his master, sent his ships abroad to trade with far countries, he always gave his servants a chance to put something in them so that they might trade for their own benefit. Now Dick had nothing but his cat, and he did not want to part from her, but, being persuaded by the others, he gave her in charge of the Captain to be sold.

After the cat had gone, Dick missed his little companion sorely, and it so happened that the kitchen-maid was more cruel and unkind than usual, so he felt he could bear it no longer, and, tying up his clothes into a little bundle, he ran away one night.

As the day broke he was climbing up Highgate Hill, on the north side of London, and, being very tired, he sat down on a stone to rest; and if you are lucky enough you may one day go to Highgate and see a stone—not the same one—which was put to mark the spot. As Dick sat there he heard the sweet bells of

Bow Church in Cheapside, about four miles away, ring out clearly, and they seemed to him to say :

"Turn again, Whittington !
Thrice Lord Mayor of London."

The words rang in his head over and over again, and at last he did "turn again," and walked slowly back, wondering if this were a prophecy about his own future. It was so early that he slipped into the house before anyone had missed him.

Now it happened that the ship with the cat on board got blown out of its course, and came to a country called Barbary, which was very rich in silver and gold. The Captain, landing here, was asked to dine with the Sultan, but what was his horror when, having accepted, and being seated, he saw the table overrun with rats and mice, who snatched the food off the dishes and had to be beaten away by the serving-men. The Captain explained to the Sultan he had on board a very splendid animal, who would make short work of these creatures, and, hearing this, nothing would satisfy the Sultan but that he must buy the cat. The Captain protested he did not want to sell it, but bringing it ashore under his coat he let it loose suddenly. Short work did puss make of the rats and mice, killing them right and left, and so much impressed was the Sultan that he showered gold and pearls upon the Captain in exchange for the cat.

Thus, not so long after Whittington had returned to his drudgery, he was summoned to his master's presence and told of his good fortune. He was now a wealthy man, and became a merchant himself, and finally married his master's daughter Alice.

Whether this part of the story is true or not, it is undoubtedly true that Dick Whittington really lived, and that he was three times Lord Mayor of London, in the years 1397, 1406, and 1419; also that he was a great benefactor to the City, and was much beloved.

Opposite to the Mansion House is the Bank of England, a long, low, strong building in whose vaults are stored tons of gold. Close by is the fine frontage of the Royal Exchange, the third which has stood here; this is where the great merchants of the City meet for business. Not just here, but not very far off, is the Guildhall, which is like the Parliament House and the Law Courts of the City rolled into one. Here great historic banquets are given, the City meetings are held, and judgment passed on prisoners.

By far the most striking events in the history of the City are the Great Plague and the Great Fire, accounts of both of which are to be found in every history book. When the City had been scourged by the Plague, so that thousands and thousands of the inhabitants had died, and been flung into common graves dug like vast trenches, then came the Fire and swept the place from end to end, burning up all the streets and houses, so that when it was over people could not tell even where their houses had stood, and the disputes in consequence were endless. As we passed London Bridge in our steamer you may have noticed a tall column rising not far from the bridge, high above all the houses; this column is called the Monument, and was put up to mark the spot where the fire began. The effects of the

fire were confined within the real City, and did not spread to Greater London.

No doubt much horrible plague-infected stuff was then burned, for the plague did not again visit London after that time, though it had frequently come before in a milder way. Still, it is a pity that, of all the picturesque charming old houses which might have been still standing, there are none left. I say none—but there are just one or two, with gables, overhanging stories, and beams embedded in the walls. These are in Holborn, and though they have been restored many times, so that it is probable very little of the real old houses is left, still they do serve to show what London must have looked like at one time when all the architecture was in the same quaint style.

Before the Fire there were over a hundred churches in the small space of the City, and after it the City architect, Sir Christopher Wren, was commissioned to rebuild some of them along with the rest of the City. He rebuilt about half the number, including our great national church, St. Paul's Cathedral, which had been completely burnt with the rest. In this church Wren himself is buried, and on his monument are Latin words, meaning: "If thou desirest to see my monument look around thee." A grander monument no man could have!

The whole length of the City, beside the river, runs a long, narrow, irregular street called Thames Street. The houses on one side of it border the river; in fact, they are built on what was a piece of foreshore or beach, and so you cannot see the street from the steamer

except by glimpses between them. A very strange place is Thames Street ; once upon a time, when all London was enclosed within the wall, it was very fashionable ; lords and ladies and royal princes rode along it, and lived in great stone mansions fronting the river. Towers rose here and there, and the stern greyness of their strong walls made a background for the gay silks and satins and velvets which men as well as women wore in those days. Orange and blue and rose could be seen in flashes as the horses, carrying their noble riders, pranced along in the dirty mire of the roadway. Now, what a change of scene is there! Gone are the fine mansions, the splendid towers, and in their place are rows of buildings of all heights and sizes, square and ugly, like boxes set up on end. Between them there is occasionally a passage running down to the water, so narrow that two persons can hardly pass in it. If we walk down Thames Street and peer into the ground-floors of the houses, we shall see places like great barns, into which carts are loading and unloading sacks of flour, barrels of beer, and crates of goods of all sorts.

From many an overhead doorway cranes are at work swinging up or down boxes and barrels into carts or drays which await them in the street. Here and there a dingy little red flag flutters to warn the passer-by to look out, or his head may be smashed by the descent of some enormous package from above, and it is better to walk right out in the roadway rather than to attempt to pass along the narrow, dangerous pavement. The street is cobble-paved and generally filthy. Everything

grinds along it at a foot's pace, smashing over the cobbles with a thunderous noise. There are no motors here, for there is no room for speed. There are immense dray-carts, solid and heavy, drawn by horses as large as elephants, beside whom an ordinary horse would appear as a fox-terrier does to a mastiff.

You will not have long to wait before seeing some pale-faced little boy in an apron of sacking, who shouts at the great horses as he forces them to go where he wants, and all the while his quick eyes are on the look-out for such a treasure as a bit of fruit or a fag-end of tobacco which he may pick up from the gutter. He works from eight to eight, day in and day out, and gets possibly five or six shillings a week. He is rapidly learning to become a man, and such is his energy that poor food, too little sleep, and incessant work have been unable to destroy it, and the dinner-hour finds him larking with other boys down an entry, playing a rough game of football with a battered hat or bound-up bundle of rags for the ball.

Such is Thames Street, perpetual loading and unloading, business only, and business all day long, and none but those who have business are wanted there.

But what a contrast on a fine Sunday morning ! The peace that reigns on that one day of the week makes up for all the turmoil of the rest. The black shadows of the tall houses lie like patches of ink on the pavement. At the few open docks the grey-green water laps gently round the rugged posts with a soft sucking noise ; peeping through a doorway, you see a picture of a very quiet river framed in heavy shadow. A cat

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WESTMINSTER ABBEY — *Page 29*

scuttles furtively across the street, and maybe you meet a solitary policeman, who looks at you curiously as he passes on his way with measured steps.

Thames Street runs almost up to Blackfriars Bridge, and once we have passed Blackfriars—so called because the old monks, the Black Friars, had a large monastery here once—we come upon an altogether different scene. Still on the south side of the river there are wharves and broken, irregular, dingy buildings, but on the north is a fine, sweeping embankment lined by trees. Above the parapet can be seen horses, cabs, carriages, and motors, with tall trams gliding beside them. Perhaps a group of children leaning over the wall are feeding the sea-gulls, throwing bits of bread high into the air, while the little gulls, daintily dressed in a livery of white and grey, with neat red legs and bills, wheel and scream in hundreds, darting in and out, diving, floating, turning, like a clever crowd of ice-skaters. Never a crumb is allowed to reach the water ; they catch it up before it begins to fall. Sometimes, however, a gull pounces on a piece of bread too large for it to swallow, and then what a game of chase follows ! Rugby football is nothing to it ! Diving, curving, skimming, the wretched bird endeavours to choke down its prize, and at last has to yield it to the snatching bill of a rival, and so the game goes merrily on, the piece of bread growing smaller with each clutch, until at last it disappears altogether.

Close at hand is the Temple, where barristers have their chambers ; it carries in its name a remembrance of the Knights Templars who once owned it. On the

other or the land side of this is Temple Bar, where the City Liberties end, and where the Lord Mayor meets the King on State occasions.

Beyond the Temple, along the riverside, were once the great houses of nobles—Surrey House, Arundel House, Somerset House, Savoy Palace, Worcester House, Durham House, and so on, names which are kept alive in the streets now running over their sites. These were very pleasant mansions, with gardens stretching down to the water, and stairs to "take water at." For in the old days people travelled by boat much more than by road, as the roads were poor and bad, sunk in mire, and not made up with a firm basis as we have them now. Instead of the palatial houses once standing here, there are now many large buildings, including some sumptuous hotels. There is still a Somerset House, though a comparatively modern one, and this is now given up to Government offices, and there are mighty hotels—the Cecil and the Savoy—with many rows of windows overlooking the river. Only one watergate, out of all the number that must have once stood here, remains, and this is far inland, stranded in a public garden near Charing Cross, for with the making of the embankment, a mighty work, the water, which had flowed over much ground, was kept back in a narrower, deeper channel, and where men walk or ride to-day was once part of the bed of the Thames.

The Strand is the great street running along on the north side of these houses, the side away from the river, and you will easily guess why it was called a strand, as strand means the piece of land bordering water. In

the days when these great houses still stood, the Strand was almost impassable, and the wheels of the clumsy, springless conveyances often stuck fast. At times, when the mud was too deep, trunks of trees were thrown in to fill up the holes!

We are beyond the City now, and are rapidly approaching Westminster, which at one time was a separate city by itself, with that long and lonesome way, now the Strand, lying between it and London. But Greater London has grown and grown, and surged around these two cities, embedding them in itself, and spreading far beyond to the north and the south, the east and the west.

CHAPTER III

WESTMINSTER

MANY ages ago, when people travelled mostly on horseback, and carried their goods on pack-horses, there were but few roads of any sort. One of the principal ones came from the north down what is now called Edgware Road, and that very fashionable part known as Park Lane. At present very rich people live in Park Lane, millionaires and dukes and such folk, but at that time there were no houses at all to border the rough tract, not much resembling what we should call a road now, which marked out the way to the south. Pilgrims and merchants coming from the north followed this route, travelling in company because of the thieves and robbers who might be encountered. The way ran down into the marshes at Westminster, which was not then called

Westminster, but Thorney Island, because a stream flowing from the north here divided into two branches, and falling into the river made an island of a piece of ground overgrown with brambles and briars.

There was a ford across the River Thames near Thorney Island—that is to say, a shallow part where men and horses could cross in safety, and so continue on their way, and this ford was most useful, as you may imagine when there was no bridge at all except London Bridge many miles farther down the river.

The monks, finding Thorney Island just the kind of place that suited them, settled here, and in time an abbey or minster was built. There is a legend about this minster. A man named Edric, a fisherman, lived by the river, and the night before the new minster was to be consecrated he heard a voice calling to him to come and fetch someone across in his boat. When he arrived at the farther shore on this errand he found a venerable-looking old man carrying some vessels that seemed to be holy vessels for the church service. Edric, being a humble man, made no remark, but ferried his visitor over, landed him near the minster, and saw him enter ; then all at once the minster was lit up by a radiant light, and lovely voices were heard chanting like angels. Edric watched entranced, feeling sure that he was witness of a miracle, and as he watched the light went out suddenly, and the stranger, reappearing beside him, said, "I am St. Peter, to whom this minster is to be dedicated. Tell thy Bishop that I myself have done the consecration. And," he added, "put in thy net and thou shalt catch a miraculous draught of fishes." So the

fisherman did, and it was as the stranger said, he could hardly draw in his net for the great weight of fishes it contained.

This is, of course, only a legend, such as many another told in the early days when stories were repeated from one mouth to another, and grew and grew in wonder with each repetition, but it is a beautiful story and worth preserving.

The new minster was called Westminster, probably because there was already a minster, namely St. Paul's, eastward, in the City of London.

The first rude Abbey Church of the monks was destroyed by the Danes, and Edward the Confessor began a new and more glorious one ; bit by bit this was enlarged by other Kings, until the Abbey stands as we see it to-day.

It is the Hall of Heroes, the chief burial-place of the great men of English race. There are mighty dead in St. Paul's—Wellington, Nelson, and Sir Christopher Wren—besides many another, but Westminster takes rank as the first national burial-place, and burial there is an honour the nation grants only to the greatest. In former days this was not so. Many a humble man, that, except for his tomb, would long since be forgotten, lies with the noblest dead, among poets, painters, historians, and statesmen.

It would be impossible, indeed, to give any sort of list of all who lie here. In one corner, called Poets' Corner, the poets are grouped together. Huge statues, larger than life, commemorate our great statesmen. Near the east end are many Kings and Queens, Princes

and Princesses. At every turn there is something to see and remember.

At Westminster is the coronation chair in which is enclosed the stone brought from Scone in Scotland. It was a sacred stone to the Scots because on it all their Kings had been crowned, and the legend ran that wherever the stone was placed, there should the Scottish Kings be crowned. And the prophecy has come true, for since the time of James the Sixth of Scotland and First of England the crowns have been united.

Many coronations have there been in the Abbey, and still fresh in our minds is that of our present King, George V., in 1911, which has been the most magnificent of all.

When King Canute reigned in England he liked the society of the monks, and spent much of his time with them, but he found it a long and tedious way to come to Westminster, so he built himself a palace on the Isle of Thorney near the monks, and this became for many generations the chief home of our Kings.

I fancy very few people know that it was at Westminster, and not on the seashore, as is commonly supposed, that Canute rebuked his courtiers for presuming to treat him as if he were a god, by allowing the tide to wash over his feet against his express command. There was of course no embankment then, and the river did not merely rise and fall as it does now within its enclosing walls, but actually ran inland and receded again as the tides of the sea do.

In early days the English Kings did not remain in

London as headquarters, but the whole court travelled about, and was frequently at Winchester and other places, so Canute's palace was probably a temporary and small affair. Other Kings built, however, on the same place, and in the splendid Houses of Parliament, which now stand on the site, there are enclosed two fine buildings due to William Rufus. But these we shall come to later. The palace, as it was through all the medieval times, was a collection of buildings of different ages and styles, more like a little town in itself than what we should call a palace ; all the workmen, and the knights and the followers of the Court, to the number of many hundreds, lived within the walls. The high walls enclosed streets, with quaint gabled houses in them, and when the King went riding through on great occasions people used to hang out beautiful pieces of cloth of many colours, red and blue and yellow, to decorate the way for him.

From the time of Edward III. the Parliament sat in part of this palace, and the Law Courts were held in another part—that is, in the great hall of Rufus. One night in 1832, only five years before Queen Victoria came to the throne, there was a terrific fire, which burnt nearly the whole of the buildings. It must have been an amazing sight to see the pillars of flame shooting upward and reflected in the water, as if the very Thames itself were afire. With the miserable appliances the firemen had at that time, the wonder is that anything was saved at all. All the old rooms, with their carving and panelling and their woodwork, burned like tinder ; but the crypt of the chapel, probably because it was

underground, was saved, and the great hall of Rufus, which was completely built of stone, was saved too, and there it is to this day to be seen by anyone.

When the rubbish was cleared away, on the place was built the present magnificent Parliament House, with the chamber for the Commons at one end and that for the Lords at the other, and at the Commons' end rises the high clock tower with Big Ben in it, and at the Lords end the Victoria Tower, while there is a broad terrace at the back overlooking the river, and here in summer the members entertain their friends and give them tea and strawberries.

Big Ben is such a well-known feature in London that we cannot pass him by altogether. He is one of the largest clocks in the world, and it takes two hours a week to wind him up. The face is 22 feet across—that is to say, as long as three men and a boy standing one on the top of the other, but on account of the great height that the clock is from the ground it does not seem to be so big. The boss in the middle, to which the hands are fastened, is the size of a small dining-room table, and is in the shape of a huge gilt rose, part of the Arms of the City of Westminster. The clock cost more than £22,000, and is one of the largest and quite the best known in the world. The time is kept exact by means of an electric connection with Greenwich, and when Big Ben booms out the hour you may safely set your watch by him.

People often say that London cannot compare with foreign cities in its buildings and streets ; it is true that many of our principal streets are narrow and ugly, and

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the houses lining them are often of different sizes, and not built on the same plan, as is customary in foreign towns of any size. But I think if any stranger were to start from Charing Cross and go to Westminster, he would admit that what he saw would be difficult to equal in any city in the world. He would come first into Trafalgar Square, with its fountains playing and its towering column pointing to the sky, carrying the figure of Nelson on the top. This figure is eighteen feet high, three times life-size, though it does not look it from the ground. Around the bottom of the pedestal are four lions in repose ; these were designed by the great animal painter, Sir Edwin Landseer. Then on the sides of the column at the foot are four pictures in bronze relief, showing Nelson's four greatest battles.

The square is wide and open, and contains many other statues, though all look small beside that of Nelson. At the north side is the National Gallery, where the nation keeps the valuable pictures which it has bought from time to time, or which have been presented to it by generous people.

Looking from the Square down Whitehall to Westminster, we see a funny little statue of King Charles I. on horseback ; the horse is so badly made that it is like a tub on four legs, yet this little statue has much to tell.

It was first made when Charles was King, but was never set up, and after his execution it was sold by Parliament to a man who was ordered to break it to pieces ; he pretended that he had done this, but in reality he only buried it ; then, when King Charles II. was restored to his father's throne, he brought it out,

and it was set up again. It stands on the spot where once stood a tall white cross of stone placed to mark where Queen Eleanor's body had rested on its last stage before it was received into Westminster Abbey to be buried. King Edward I., whose Queen she was, was so distraught with grief at her death, that he caused to be erected twelve such beautiful crosses at different stopping places on the way from Lincoln, where she had died, to Westminster, where she was buried. The one at Charing Cross (which was so called from the cross) was by far the grandest, and it is a pity it could not have been preserved. In the yard of the station not far off there is an imitation one supposed to be on the model of it, but in reality it is nothing like it. The cross was pulled down by the Parliament, and a poem was made upon its downfall :

"Undone, undone, the lawyers are ;
They wander about the towne ;
Nor can find the way to Westminster
Now Charing Cross is downe.
At the end of the Strand they make a stand,
Swearing they are at a loss,
And chaffing say, that's not the way,
They must go by Charing Cross."

Close by was the pillory in which men sentenced to undergo this punishment used to stand for hours with their head and hands fast, so that anyone could pelt them with eggs and filth. It must have been an awful trial, and worse for some than others, for some had their ears and noses slit up first!

At the Restoration, four of the men who had voted for the beheading of King Charles I. were themselves

executed on the very place where the figure of King Charles on horseback was afterwards set up.

Charing Cross is counted the middle of London, and from it cab fares are reckoned.

Looking down Whitehall, we see very fine Government offices on both sides of the wide street. The Admiralty and the new War Office are almost opposite to each other, and then come the Foreign Office, the Treasury, the Exchequer, the Home Office, and many others. These are the business offices of the nation.

About half-way down, a very different-looking building, with pillars running up the front, attracts attention. This is now the United Service Museum, but it is also the only part left of the fine new palace which James I. meant to build.

In the time of Henry VIII., the palace at Westminster was dilapidated and inconvenient, and Henry saw that the beautiful house of Cardinal Wolsey in Whitehall, which was called York House, would be much nicer to live in, so he took it for himself, as he generally did when he wanted anything, and this became the palace of the King, and was re-named Whitehall Palace. At about the same time Henry took also a house in St. James's Park, which was an almshouse for leprous women, and he built instead another palace there called St. James's Palace—and a very picturesque building it is, standing to this day.

However, Whitehall Palace, after lasting until the time of James II., was burnt in a great fire. And of the new palace—planned by James I. and designed by Inigo Jones, the greatest architect of his time—nothing

was built but this one fragment called the Banqueting Hall.

The most interesting and the saddest memory of Whitehall is, that on that day when England shamed herself by cutting off the head of her King, a platform was erected outside the windows of the first floor of this Banqueting Hall, and on it was placed a scaffold ; then King Charles I., slight, pale and grave, but perfectly calm, stepped forth, and, stripping himself of his ornaments, laid his head on the block, with a prayer, and was beheaded! Thus the curious little statue of Charles at Charing Cross facing down Whitehall seems to be ever riding toward the place of his death.

Passing on to Westminster, we see a splendid picture opened out by the widening of the street in recent years. We note the low central tower of the abbey, with the two high western towers, and in front the old church of St. Margaret, cuddling in close to the abbey like a child to its mother. We see the graceful lines of the Houses of Parliament, with Big Ben high up at one end, and the Victoria Tower rising at the other, and the whole beautiful group has as a foreground the green lawns of the public garden kept ever smooth. Here, as at Trafalgar Square, a great space, once covered with squalid houses and narrow, noisome streets, has been cleared and beautified and made worthy of London.

We could go on up the river in our steamer further than Westminster : we could see Lambeth, where is the palace of the Archbishops of Canterbury on the other side ; much further up we could go past Chelsea, once a village in the fields, but now all part of London ; and

so by Fulham we should come to the home of the Bishops of London, where once the Danes wintered and dug a moat which still exists ; and so to Hammersmith, where London, counted as such, ends, though the houses still go on by Chiswick to Kew. But this is only a peep, and we have no time for wide excursions, so we must be content with what we have already seen from the river, and dip into some different scenes inside London.

CHAPTER IV

THE TOWER AND ITS TALES

Once the river flowed around the stern walls of the Tower, entering by Traitors' Gate, a water-gate, and filling the huge moat, which now lies dry and forms a playground and drill-ground for soldiers. You can see them almost any time, from the landward side, by peeping over the wall and looking down into the bed of the moat far below. In the old days, when the river was the chief highway, full many a sorrowful prisoner came by boat to that gate, and as they were rowed in under the low, dark archway, the shadow which fell upon them seemed like the shadow which had blackened their lives.

Prison, fortress, palace the Tower has been all in turns, sometimes all at once, and if the grim walls could yield up their secrets, melancholy indeed would be the tale : the sorrowful sighing of the prisoners would rise like a black cloud to heaven. Stories which are well known, being woven into English history, are in them-

selves enough to make us sad, and they are only a small part of those which have taken place here. The tormented men and women, who were the actors in these stories, were many of them noble and good, for the Tower was not a common gaol, but a State prison for those who by birth or action had had the misfortune to offend the great in high places. There were strange turns of fortune's wheel, and some, after suffering imprisonment, themselves became the gaolers of others.

Among these was Queen Elizabeth, who as a Princess was sent here by her sister, Queen Mary, to be kept in strict confinement because there was a possibility that the Protestants might attempt to put her on the throne instead of the Catholic Queen Mary, whose persecutions had aroused bitter hatred against her. When Elizabeth stepped ashore from the boat which conveyed her to the Tower, she said : "Here landeth as true a subject, being a prisoner, as ever landed on these stairs, and before Thee, O God, I speak it, having none other friends but Thee." Then she sat down on a stone and said : "Better sit on a stone than in a cell." But her resistance was in vain ; she was forced to move on.

When, on Mary's death, Elizabeth became Queen, one of the first places she visited was the Tower, perhaps in order to mark the joyful contrast in her circumstances. Yet it was Elizabeth who condemned Sir Walter Raleigh to the Tower merely because he displeased her by marrying another woman instead of remaining her constant admirer. He was released in order to go on an expedition of discovery, but under James I. again tasted the hospitality of the Tower, and finally ended his adventurous

and extraordinarily varied life by being beheaded at Westminster.

Almost the opposite fate from Elizabeth's was that of Lady Jane Grey, who came to the Tower a mere girl, called Queen by her father and father-in-law, and, but a very short time after, was kept there as a prisoner, not to be released until she was led out to the block and beheaded on the same day as her young husband.

The story, however, which will always be peculiarly connected with the Tower is that the young Princes who are said to have been murdered there, Edward V. and his brother Richard, Duke of York, boys of thirteen and eleven, had been taken by their uncle Richard, Duke of Gloucester, from the charge of their mother, and brought to the Tower on the pretence that, as Edward was soon to be crowned King, he ought to be lodged in what was then still one of the royal palaces. At first the young boys, though sorrowful at being separated from their mother and sisters, had no fear for themselves, and as the preparations for the coronation were going on, they probably thought that very soon they would be free. In those days palaces were generally gloomy places, with few windows and small, uncomfortable rooms, so this would not affect their spirits. As the days went on, however, rumours came to them that the coronation was not intended for Edward, but for his uncle Richard! Even then the boys would hardly fear for their own safety, for they were so powerless it would not seem worth their uncle's while to murder them. Yet suddenly one day the two boys disappeared and were never heard of again alive! Such

a thing would be quite impossible now, but in those dark days crimes were sometimes committed by those in high places which, though well known to many, were hushed up. Little by little the story leaked out, how no one knew. It seemed that Robert Brackenbury, the keeper of the Tower, had been told to murder the young Princes at night, and that he had refused to do it, and so he was ordered to give up the keys of the Tower for one night. Well must he have known what that order meant! But what could he do? If he opposed the will of Richard of Gloucester his own head would be cut off immediately, and he had a wife and children to think of. So sorrowfully he yielded his keys to Sir James Tyrrell, who took with him two rough men, so low and coarse that they would have killed anyone for money. Sir James led them by the rude, winding stair, in the darkness of the night, to where the royal boys were asleep in each other's arms. Such children were they that a couple of pillows sufficed to smother their breath, and sleeping they died; then the bodies were carried down and buried under the great stones at the foot of the staircase. This was, as I say, not known at the time; the boys simply disappeared; but two hundred years later, when Richard of Gloucester had long gone to pay the penalty of his crimes, some workmen came upon the bones of two boys of just the right sizes, at the foot of the stairs, and there can be little reasonable doubt that these were the remains of the young Princes, and that the terrible story is true.

The eldest sister of the boys, the Princess Elizabeth,

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THE TOWER AND THE RIVER. *Page 37.*

married Henry VII., a distant relative, who claimed the crown on the side of the House of Lancaster, and in his reign there appeared a young man who pretended he was little Richard of York, who was supposed to have been killed in the Tower. He made up a wonderful story about his having been saved when his brother was killed, and smuggled out of the Tower, and now he said he returned to claim the crown. However, it was proved he was only of poor origin, and that his name was Perkin Warbeck, so King Henry VII. gave him a position in his kitchen, and there he lived quite contentedly.

Another story of the Tower, which is not so sad as that of the boy Princes, tells of the thrilling escape of Lord Nithsdale, one of the most romantic escapes in all the history of England. When George I. was on the throne there had been a plot to dethrone him and restore the House of Stuart, and Lord Nithsdale was one of those who had planned it. Unhappily for him it was discovered, and he was taken to the Tower with others, there to await his fate, and well he knew what it would be!

But his wife was quite determined that he should not die. In terrible weather she came up to London from Scotland where they lived. Trains had not been thought of then, of course, and even the coaches were stopped by the snow, so the lady rode the greater part of the way, plunging through snow-drifts up to her horse's girths. Then she went and besought the King for her husband's life, but without success. He treated her with gross rudeness, tearing himself away from her clinging hands as she knelt before him, so that she fell

over on the ground. She saw that she could hope for no mercy there, and must rely only on herself.

Poor Lady Nithsdale had two friends, Mrs. Mills and Mrs. Morgan, and to them she confided a plan she had made, and they agreed to help her. She was allowed to see her husband in the Tower, and, now that the day of execution was fixed and rapidly drawing nigh, she had obtained permission to take one friend at a time to the Tower with her. One day, according to the plan, she dressed Mrs. Morgan, who was a little thin woman, in two complete sets of clothes one over the other, for one of these was meant to be used as a disguise for the imprisoned Earl. Mrs. Morgan took off this extra suit when she was in the cell and gave it to him. Then she hurried out and told Mrs. Mills she might come in. Mrs. Mills was a big, large person, and they hoped that, when dressed in woman's clothes, Lord Nithsdale might be mistaken for her. The ladies hurried backwards and forwards once or twice, pretending to cry, with their handkerchiefs over their faces, so that the gaolers should get puzzled as to how many of them there really were in the cell. Then at last, when all was ready, and Lord Nithsdale had been disguised, with painted eyebrows and woman's things, he and his wife went out together. There was a great difficulty in hiding his beard, and they had no time to shave him, so they tucked it down the front of his cloak, and he held up his handkerchief over his face as the others had done. Lady Nithsdale did not go right outside with him for fear that the gaolers should go into the cell and find it empty, but after just seeing him past the guards,

she went back, and pretended to keep up a conversation with him in the cell, sobbing a good deal. When she had stayed as long as she thought sufficient to let him get safely away, she came out, and, shutting the door, asked the gaolers not to disturb him, as he was praying. In this way she gained a little more time. The clever plan of this brave and devoted woman was really successful; the Earl did get right away and over to the Continent, and King George could not capture him again. Though all his estates were taken from him, I do not suppose he or his wife thought a great deal about that after the escape they had had; they would feel too thankful for his life to grumble at anything else.

Many of the martyrs in Queen Mary's reign were imprisoned in the Tower, and some spent their time cutting texts deeply into the hard stone walls; many texts speak still, though the hand that cut them has long been cold. Some of the cells are full of these texts and messages, all telling of radiant faith and brightness of spirit.

There is a chapel in the Tower, and outside, but within the precincts, is another, called St. Peter ad Vincula. Close to it is the execution ground, where so many noble people were beheaded. It was considered a privilege to be beheaded within the walls of the Tower instead of outside on Tower Hill, where the crowds could gape and stare at the unfortunate victim's end. Yet many very noble men were beheaded outside, too, among them Sir Thomas More, who did not approve of Henry VIII.'s putting away one wife in order to marry another. He was executed at six o'clock in the morn-

ing, and his head was put up on London Bridge. This was more than his daughter Margaret could bear, so she bribed men to help her, and, going down the river in a boat, she stole her own father's head, and, wrapping it in a cloth, carried it back to the home in Chelsea, where she buried it in the church.

Inside the Tower, strongly guarded, are the regalia, as the royal crowns and jewels are called. Here are diamonds as large as pigeons' eggs, and rubies too. Indeed, it is difficult to believe these wonderful jewels are real ! Most interesting of all is one of the latest, the Cullinan diamond, the largest ever found, which was discovered in South Africa and presented to the King, and is now in the sceptre which he carries when he wears his crown.

In the reign of Charles II. an attempt was actually made to steal the King's crown, and a man named Colonel Blood got away with it under his cloak, but he was caught soon after. He seems to have made such a good impression on the King, however, that he was hardly punished at all !

Before leaving the Tower we must just say one word about the Beefeaters, the fine men in scarlet, with flat caps, who add so much to the picturesqueness and interest of the old buildings. Their real name is Yeomen of the Guard, but they are far better known as Beefeaters, a word which comes from the French *buffetier*, meaning a man who waits at a buffet or side-board. The Beefeaters are the Tower guard, and every night go round with the keys to lock up the gates.

The Tower and its Tales

The Tower was not all built at one time. Like nearly all those buildings which are worth studying, it is a record of history, each part telling its own story of the King or great man who caused it to be made. In the reign of William the Conqueror there was no strong castle for the King to live in, only an old fortress near the river where the Tower now stands. This King William pulled down, and in its stead he began building a great castle for himself, and it is that which has grown into the Tower. The citizens were at first annoyed by this mighty stronghold rising in their midst, because they feared the power of the King, and they did not at all like having a part of their City wall pulled down to make way for it. Before it was finished, William died, and his son, William Rufus, went on with it. The square building in the middle, with the four little corner towers, is this building made by the two first Williams ; it is called the White Tower, though it is not now white at all, and it has been very much altered. It was in the reign of Richard Cœur de Lion that the moat was made, though it was principally done under the orders of his brother John, who tried to make himself King while Richard was away in the Holy Land. It must have been tremendous work digging out that deep and wide moat. So bit by bit the Tower grew, sometimes one King and sometimes another adding a part, until as we see it now it looks like a number of buildings of all ages, sizes, and sorts joined together and encircled by a deep ditch.

CHAPTER V

OLD LONDON BRIDGE

Of all the fascinating places in London, next to the Tower, was Old London Bridge. Alas! it is quite gone, and we can visit it only in imagination. From time immemorial a bridge stood at this part of the river; it was at first built of wood, and it is guessed that the planks of which it was made were put together so loosely that there were cracks between, because in the river bed below, numbers of ancient coins have been scooped up, and it is supposed that they must have been dropped by the people crossing the bridge, who held them carelessly in their hands. There was, we know, a toll or payment to be made for crossing, in which case people would be likely to have their money ready and so the more easily lose it.

In the year 1212 a most terrible accident befell the bridge then standing, which was the first one built of stone. It had only been finished about twelve years when a great fire broke out on the south side of the river not far from the end of it. Hundreds of people ran across the bridge, or stood on it, in order to watch the fire doing its destructive work. At last the fire so grew in intensity that it caught the south end of the bridge itself, whereupon the people began to crowd backwards; but there was a strong wind blowing, and it caught the sparks and flames and carried them over the heads of the people to the north end of the bridge, which also began to burn, and so the poor sightseers

were in a position of great danger between two fires! They ran to and fro, jostling each other and crying ; the strong trampled down the weak, and some went almost mad with fear as they saw that the two fires were drawing toward each other, and that they should be caught between them. Hundreds leaped into the water, some were saved in the boats which had put out from the shore to help them, but others were drowned. It must have been an awful sight—hundreds of unfortunate people clung to the parapets and tried to drop thence into the boats ; others scrambled down the piers and even pulled hold of each other, caring nothing for the safety of any but themselves in their selfish agony. It was reckoned that what with the people burned and those drowned, something like 3,000 perished that day!

After that the bridge had to be again rebuilt, and it is this bridge, generally spoken of peculiarly as Old London Bridge, which is the most interesting of all. It really was a wonderful piece of work. On each side were houses which projected out above the water. Think of the delight of being able to sit up in a little lattice window and to look down on the rolling flood of the Thames below ! The houses formed a street, which was very narrow and dark because the upper stories of the houses were built out toward each other, as was the fashion in those days. If you had walked along you could not have known that you were not in an ordinary street, except that every here and there gaps between the houses gave glimpses of the river. There were shops on the ground floors of the houses—what we should call stalls, for they were not covered in—and here drapers,

and silk-men, and hatters, and hosiers pursued their trade, and pretty girls called out to customers, "Come buy, come buy!"

There was constant pushing and passing and jostling in the street, also a good deal of rough horse-play, and far more street cries than we should hear now.

Upon the bridge, apart from the houses themselves, which were as charming as a picture, though no doubt very inconvenient to live in, there were other objects of great interest. For instance, there was the chapel of St. Thomas, in two stories, most beautifully built. What a pity that chapel could not have been preserved! The windows were of stained glass, and the pillars were carved, while the crypt underneath was paved with black and white marble; it was described as a gem of a chapel.

At one end of the bridge stood a very remarkable house called Nonesuch House, and indeed it is quite likely there was none such another house in all the world, for it was put together like a puzzle with wooden pegs, and not a nail was used in its construction. The pieces had been made in Holland, and were brought over and set up here. The front was wonderfully carved, and on each side rose domes with short spires. There were windows with carved wooden galleries before them, and wooden panels and gilded columns formed part of this remarkable house.

Two of the arches of the bridge were at one time filled up by mills for grinding corn. The water flowing through turned the mill-wheels and did the work, and the poor people could bring their corn here and have it ground into flour at reasonable charges. There was

THE APPRENTICES SHORN OF THEIR CURLS AND RIBBONS *Page 50.* *Ralph Hedley, R.S.A.*
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also another arch in which waterworks were arranged, and from these works the City was supplied for nearly two hundred years.

In the middle of the bridge was a drawbridge—that is, a part which could be drawn up so as to leave a gap and thus prevent any enemy passing over into the City. As there was no other bridge over the river at London at all until 1738, when the one at Westminster was begun, this was not so absurd as it sounds, and really did prove a defence. In the old days, when an enemy or a rebel with his followers came along the south side of the river, if he found the way barred to him by the raising of the drawbridge, he had to go many miles further up, to Kingston, before he could get across at all. Many and many a time there was wild fighting on the bridge in spite of this precaution, and one time there was a famous duel fought here between an Englishman and a Scot, in which the Scot won.

Very gruesome was the great gate at the south end of the bridge, on which the heads of those who had been executed were set up on poles. Sometimes the kites and other birds preyed upon them; sometimes, in a high wind, one would blow off its pole and roll down into the street at the feet of the passers-by! It seems incredible to us that such a custom should ever have been allowed. Among the heads so exposed were those of some great and good men—namely, William Wallace, the Scottish patriot, and, as we have heard, those of Sir Thomas More, and Bishop Fisher. The legend goes that the faces of Bishop Fisher and Sir Thomas More, instead of decaying and wither-

ing, grew daily fresher and brighter until, for very shame, the men who had ordered their deaths were obliged to throw Fisher's into the river; Sir Thomas More's, as we have already heard, was carried off by his daughter. Look at the picture in the end cover of this book, and you will see the old bridge with the heads stuck up on the gateway.

Of all the stories about the bridge none is more interesting than that of the apprentice, Edward Osborne, who became Lord Mayor. In his time, which was during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, there lived on London Bridge a respectable merchant and clothworker called Sir William Hewett. He had several apprentices, of which Edward was one. In those days it was the custom for lads to be formally apprenticed to merchants and shopkeepers, and work out a time with them under much stricter conditions than we have now. There are still apprentices to trades nowadays, but it is not the universal custom as it was then.

The old-time apprentices were kept under very strict rules and regulations, but they lived with their master's family, and were usually well looked after. The rules even included those relating to dress, and at one time there was a riot among the boys, because a law had been passed forbidding anyone below a certain rank to wear their hair in long curls or to have bows of ribbon at their knees, both of which things were fashionable then. Most trying was it to them, and especially to the older youths, when they were caught and the curls shorn off and the ribbons torn away!

One day Edward Osborne was looking out over the

river in his master's house, and was suddenly startled to see his master's only little daughter, Anne, fall past him from an open window, where she had been playing in charge of her nurse, and go with a splash into the river. Not one instant did the brave boy hesitate ; he plunged in after her, and at last succeeded in saving the drowning child. There is a pretty end to the story, which is true. When they grew up, Edward married Anne and started a good business on his own account, and finally became Lord Mayor of London, and was called Sir Edward Osborne. From him are descended the Dukes of Leeds, whose family name is Osborne.

The bridge suffered in the Great Fire of London, but the houses then burnt were rebuilt. When, however, after several generations, the houses got more and more tottering, and the danger of continuing to use the old bridge was recognized, the City at last built a new London Bridge close beside the old one. It was not for a long time the authorities could make up their minds to pull down the old one, but it was done at last, just five years before Queen Victoria ascended the throne. Then the bones of Peter of Colechurch, who had built the first stone bridge across the river, the one on which the disastrous fire occurred, were found buried in the chapel of St. Thomas on the bridge. So he, as well as Sir Christopher Wren, might have said, "If thou desirest to see my monument, look around thee."

CHAPTER VI

STREETS AND HOUSES

Long ago, when the ways of the City were quagmires, and the only idea of mending them was to throw the trunks of trees into the worst holes, it would have seemed quite incredible to anyone that one day almost all the miles and miles of streets in London would be made of neatly-fitted blocks of wood, touching each other like the pieces in a puzzle. Why, even to us who walk over them daily, it is wonderful if we come to think of it.

Have you ever watched men paving a London street? First they make a smooth surface of a kind of paste called concrete, which sets hard when it dries. Upon this are placed the little wooden blocks in shape like bricks. Each one is dipped in boiling tar to fill up the chinks, and prevent the wood rotting. Very firm and beautiful is the surface thus made when first finished, but the enormous amount of traffic passing over it soon wears it into holes. The removal of the old blocks has to be done with a pickaxe, so firmly are they set. Being soaked in tar, they make excellent fuel, and when the streets are being pulled up there is generally a long row of coster carts, drawn by patient little donkeys, waiting to get the broken blocks and carry them off to sell cheaply to the poor.

It is true that nowadays most vehicles are motors and have rubber tyres to their wheels, which are not so

destructive as the iron tyres, but then, on the other hand, the weight of some of these motors is very great. The huge motor-buses are blue and red and scarlet and gold ; very grand they look in the streets, and the little taxi-cabs are often gay in brilliant green or scarlet. They fly in and out between the others like small torpedo craft amid huge men-of-war. There are very few horse omnibuses left on the streets now, and daily the hansoms grow less in number.

No one can grumble much at the disappearance of either. The horse-buses were terribly stuffy inside, often without any means of ventilation at all, and the atmosphere when they were full was enough to poison anybody. The motor-buses are much more roomy and better aired. In fact, people are gradually learning the value of fresh air, and insist on getting it. A great deal is done by teaching the children in the schools to sit with a row of great windows open at the top all day, and thus get over the foolish fear that their parents had of every breath of air which they called a draught. The hansoms, too, were very dangerous, and if it was raining and the window was down, there was grave risk of an accident, because, if the horse slipped, the passenger was bound to fall forward through the glass.

The streets in the best shopping districts of London are full of colour and brightness, for besides all the gaudy vehicles constantly passing, the shops have immense plate-glass windows filled with beautiful things. In one you will see the silkiest materials displayed in regular fountains of colour ; in another splendid toys

lit up with electric light to the best advantage, and the flower shops of the West End are a dream of beauty.

There is one old heavily-paned small shop left in the City not far from the Mansion House, and this shows us what the old shops used to be like, when indeed they began to have glass at all ; at that time all the illuminations used to display the goods were candles of a poor sort. Nowadays any shop with any pretence to fashion has its huge windows made of solid sheets of clear glass, cast all in one piece, and its lighting is of the very latest kind.

Even on the dreariest winter night the streets are bright, with great arc lights overhead, and the shop windows lining the thoroughfare, and the countless lamps of the vehicles reflected from the wet street and dancing to and fro. It is only in fog that none of our lights are of any avail. There is something peculiar about a fog which seems to cut off the rays at their source. The arc lights are seen just as if they were one dull red core, and the bus-drivers have to grope their way from one point to another.

The traffic, though it is so mixed, quick and slow things all going together, is kept under wonderful control. There are certain places where cabs may stand to be hired so many at a time ; certain places where omnibuses may stop and others where they may not. Everything is regulated by the police. As you know, in England and Holland all vehicles must keep to the left side, but in all other countries they keep to the right. Our plan certainly has common sense to recom-

mend it, because the driver must sit on the right so as to have his whip hand free, and thus he is on the passing side, and can see how much room he has between himself and the vehicles he meets. Besides, he does not run the same risk of flicking the passers-by on the pavement with his whip lash as if he were on their side.

The rule of the left is very strictly kept in London. You may sometimes see a cyclist or a small cart try to get by on the wrong side of a lamp-post in the middle of the street. The policeman in charge does not shout out or argue ; he waves his large hand, and the offender has to creep meekly back and round the other side. Everyone must obey the policeman in the London streets. Let a policeman but hold up his hand, and woe be to the luckless driver who does not instantly come to a standstill. At a busy corner where two streets cross each other you will find two policemen at work all day long controlling the traffic. The older of the two plants himself on the left side of the roadway, where the street running north and south crosses the other, and the younger policeman does the same opposite to him, so the traffic in that street is completely cut off, and all the cabs and omnibuses and other conveyances are drawn up in a long line behind each policeman. Frantic men, going to catch a train, put their heads out of the windows and growl at the delay ; ladies, already late for appointments, sigh with resignation, but no one can do anything. Then, after a few minutes, when Mr. Policeman senior thinks the east and west street has had its fair turn, he strides across and blocks that

and lets the north and south one go, and thus the game goes on all day long.

If one vehicle runs into another, and both drivers begin to abuse each other, up comes Mr. Policeman with a notebook, and takes down the names and addresses of the two, and notes the damage. Sometimes a big motor-bus skids—that is, swings round in the greasy mud, so that the hind part knocks into some standing cart. As I have said, most of the London streets are now wood, but some are asphalte, especially those in the City, and both wood and asphalte are inclined to be slippery when wet, so that the rubber wheels of the motor vehicles slip sideways on the smooth surface instead of going straight forward, and the driver cannot do anything to stop them.

One thing which adds greatly to the beauty of the streets almost all the year round are the piled-up baskets of flowers sold by the flower-women and girls who sit together at certain places, such as Oxford Circus and Piccadilly Circus. Glorious masses of daffodils, freesia, lilies and roses, great scented bunches of wall-flowers, and fluffy balls of yellow mimosa, take their turns in adding their delicate scent and colour to the scene.

A very different kind of colouring is to be found on the hoardings; wherever there is a blank space, such as where houses have been pulled down, and the ground boarded in, there blossom out the chief glories or advertisement. Men with light ladders and huge paste-pots go quickly from one hoarding to another, putting up new posters and covering up those that are

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PICCADILLY CIRCUS. *Page 56.*

torn or dirty. These vast pictures are like an enormous open book that anyone passing may read. Very clever some of them are, too ; they may be somebody's soap, and someone else's blacking, or the advertisement of a scene in a theatre, or a political skit, but whatever it is, it is sure to attract attention, for that is the one object of the posters.

Let us look down into a London street for a moment. We see all the traffic, the slow carts trying to keep along beside the kerb, and the quicker things in the middle ; we see people trying to cross the street : they skip over to an island, and then get stopped there while taxi-cabs dash in strings on each side and send the mud —and there is nearly always mud to be sent—up over them from both sides at once.

In and out, almost under the wheels, are boys dressed in mud-bespattered blue serge blouses, sweeping up the dirt from the street ; only long practice could save them from being run over. At a great pace comes by a youth on a cycle, with a perfect mountain of newspapers on his back. It is amazing to see how he keeps his balance so weighted and going full tilt amid all the traffic, but he never makes a slip. He pulls up suddenly, with one foot on the pavement, and is immediately surrounded by an army of ragged boys, who buy the papers from him by the dozen ; then off they all race in different directions, yelling shrilly, "Speshul eedition ! Great murder case ! Police in East End ! All the winners !" and so on.

Perhaps we hear suddenly the ringing of a whirring bell, and the vehicles begin crowding to one side to

make way, for the fire-engine is coming, and everything pulls up to let it get past. Here it comes ; it may be a motor or drawn by horses, if the latter, the good horses gallop as no others may in London. The men in helmets are clinging on to the sides, and sparks and smoke fly out behind from the engine, which is kept up at full pressure so as to be ready for use in a moment. Men and boys begin to race after the engine, and presently another comes and another, the firemen ringing the great bell and shouting to clear the way before them ; round a corner they go, and on and on. The fire may be far away still, and many who follow will drop out before it is reached.

The months of May and June are what is called the Season in London. Then many rich people, who live elsewhere for the rest of the year, make a point of being in Town so that they may see and entertain their friends. The park is full of carriages in the afternoon, and there are to be seen the finest carriage-horses in Europe. Beautifully dressed men and women hurry from place to place, keeping half a dozen engagements in one afternoon. The streets are blocked, and the work-aday people, who have to get to and fro to make their living, find that they are obliged to waste much time.

It is at times like these that the Londoner feels the benefit of being able to go underground. In almost any part of London he will find himself not far from a lift which takes him down to a railway by which he can get anywhere he wants. The whole of London is undermined by these tunnelled railways, which are like the

galleries in a mole-hill. They are nearly all connected at one point or another, and the tickets can be bought right through from a station on one railway to a station on another, so they are very convenient. The trains are run by electricity, and there is, therefore, no smoke or dirt, and many people prefer to dive down underground and use what they call "the tube" rather than to fight for a place in the omnibuses above ground.

What are called the residential parts of London are very different from the shopping streets. Here there are long, rather gloomy-looking rows of houses and squares, all built in a uniform style. They do not look attractive at all, yet inside they are often very comfortable. Land in London is so valuable that when a man builds houses he makes them stand on as small a space as possible, and he gains room by sending them up high into the air. The houses are thus long, narrow strips tightly wedged in against each other. They are nearly all built on one pattern, and a very foolish pattern it is. Down below the level of the pavement is the kitchen, which looks on to a little dug-out yard called the area; the area is reached by a descent of steps, and tradesmen have to go that way. Even in the most expensive houses the kitchen gets no sun, and often very little light too. On the ground-floor is usually the dining-room, and a small room at the back which can be used as a smoking-room or study. The whole of the first floor in a London house is generally sacrificed to the drawing-room, which runs right through from front to back, and then above this come the bedrooms, floor above floor, requiring flights

and flights of steps to reach them, and there is no room for a lift.

Small wonder is it that people have taken to living in flats, which are single floors spread out one above another, so that each person has the whole of one level, and instead of his share of space reaching up and down like a slice set on end, he gets it like a slice laid flat. It does not much matter how high up such flats may be, because there is a lift with a porter in attendance, and when once you have been taken up to your flat, there is no more going up to do.

In some of the best flats the rooms are quite as large as in the houses, and as there is no carrying up and down stairs to do, the work for the maids is much lessened.

In the old-fashioned squares surrounded by houses there is generally a garden belonging to all the houses together, and each householder has a key. What a poor sort of garden this seems to a country child! It is against the rules to take a dog into it, and the garden is only surrounded by an iron railing, so that every passer-by can see into it. The paths are dull and level, the shrubs smoke-blackened and poor, the grass carefully kept, but with no richness in it. These gardens are a poor thing, but still they are better than nothing, and make small green oases in deserts of streets.

CHAPTER VII

A LITTLE LONDON GIRL

EMMA was five when this story begins. She was different in appearance from other children. When anyone saw her playing with the others, they always noticed her at once, saying, "What a funny little girl!" She had bright brown eyes like a little squirrel, and very bright red bushy hair, not unlike a squirrel's tail; her face was chubby and round, and she looked as if she had always had enough to eat.

She lived at Shepherd's Bush, which has a pleasant, countrified sound, but is in reality just a part of London. There is a green, it is true, but the grass is poor, and so trodden down that great patches of earth are bare, and the poor, shivering little trees around look very miserable. Dirty tramps, both men and women, lie often on what remains of the grass, and open out dreadful-looking bundles in which they carry all the odds and ends they have collected from the dust-bins.

It is quite a mistake to suppose that all the poor people live in the East End of London and all the well-to-do ones in the West. The East End is certainly the poor quarter, but there are terrible slums everywhere, even close up to the most expensive and wealthy parts. The street in which little Emma Taylor lived was a narrow one, lined on one side by barrows on which were spread out things to sell. In the evenings these barrows looked very bright, with great gas-jets flaring

down upon them, and blowing in the wind. To Emma it was one of the most interesting places that could be imagined. There were glazed scrolls of stiff cardboard, with inscriptions on them, on most of the stalls ; these she could not read until she had been at school for some years, but when she did they always fascinated her. Some ran, "We take the lead, others only follow," and another was, "Do not go further, you will only fare worse."

The fruit stalls were very brilliant just about Christmas-time, with piles of yellow oranges and lemons, apples shiny and ruddy, dates stuck together in great masses, tomatoes of a red to set your teeth on edge, and many another thing. The goody stalls, however, were those the children liked most, and perhaps it was as well for them they had not much money to spend, or there might have been more aches and pains among them. There were sweets so sticky that you always had to eat the paper bag too, for the stuff inside would not come away from it, and slabs of chocolate with "cream" sticking out like soap, also sweets of a wonderful pink like no other pink on earth, and quite a quantity could be bought for a halfpenny. The vegetable stalls were often really pretty with tufty carrots in bunches, and leeks hanging up. The fish stall, though ugly in itself, always attracted a crowd by its smell, which promised food to hungry little boys and girls. The flower stalls were quite pretty, and the flowers very cheap, only you had to take care, because, unless you examined them carefully, you would find they all died at once when put into water, as they were seldom fresh, and had often lain

under somebody's bed in a close attic all night. All day long and till late at night the smuts showered down on the goods, and the people stood in the mud by their stalls, selling to others as poor as themselves.

Emma's father was a window-cleaner, and that is a trade which is called unskilled, for it needs no training at all, and anyone can do it, so that if a man is not very careful he will lose his job for the least little thing, as the master knows he can pick up a dozen like him at once. Her mother had been a general servant. If she had only known how to manage she could have made very savoury soups and stews with the cheap vegetables she could buy, but she knew nothing about cooking, and the meat she bought was generally tough and tasteless before she had finished with it, or was boiled till it was like nothing but rags. Emma was the only child, which was the reason why she came to be chubby even though her parents were so poor. They lived in one room looking out on to the street, and paid four-and-sixpence a week for it. Besides this, Emma's father paid threepence a week each for himself and his wife into a club, so that if either of them died they would have a good funeral, and he paid sixpence a week to another club which would give him a few shillings a week if he were obliged to give up work on account of illness. This left about twelve-and-six a week to live upon, for food and clothing and other expenses.

Every morning Emma trotted down to the great County Council school about a mile away, holding on to her father's finger for support, because she was only a small girl. He used to leave her at the school on his

way to work, and a bigger girl, whose home lay not far from Shepherd's Bush, used to bring her back. Emma loved the school, with its great airy windows and large light rooms. In her own room at home the window would not open at all, and the panes were so dirty and so covered up with curtains that very little light came in at all from the narrow street. At first the lessons at school were just like games ; the children were taught to march and sing and to count beads or to make little mats, or model things in clay.

The teachers at the school were very kind, and many a child used to bring them a bunch of flowers, sometimes very much withered, but however poor they were the teacher always put them in a glass of water where all the room could see them. One day when Emma was playing in the gutter outside her own door, she saw some great red flowers which rested on the edge of a stall near to her. They were called double dahlias, but she did not know that. She crept nearer and nearer, and then, sitting right in the gutter, almost under the stall, she reached up and pulled one out. She thrust it under her pinafore, holding it with one hand, and being frightened at what she had done, sat very still for a while with a finger in her mouth, then, when the man's back was turned, she slowly crept away again. Though she was so young, yet she knew she had done wrong, and she did not show her mother the flower, but hid it under some clothes in a corner. The next morning when she dragged it out its head was drooping, but it did not look very bad, being a hardy flower that lasts for a long time. She held it in one hand under her

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pinafore as she trotted along beside her father, but the wind blew round a corner in a sudden gust, up went the little pinafore, and there was the naughty hand holding the flower. Mr. Taylor stopped at once.

"Where did ye get that, Honey?" he asked, for he was always very kind to his little girl.

She did not answer, but her cheeks grew redder than ever.

"Did anyone gi'e it to ye?" She shook her head.

He turned and marched her back again the way they had come.

"Now where did ye tak' it from?" he asked when they reached the stalls. She pointed, so he went up to the salesman. "My little gell's taken a flower off of yer," he explained. "She—she's only little, and she doesn't know, but she's come to say she's sorry and 'll never do so no more. Why! that's thieving, that is! Ye are sorry, Emma?"

She twisted up a corner of her pinafore and began to cry. "There, there," said the man good-humouredly. "She didn't mean any harm."

Then Emma spoke. "For teacher," she said, sobbing.

"For teacher, was it? Well, here's another, a fresh un," and he held out a big bright flower, but Mr. Taylor would not allow her to take it. He thanked the salesman and took the child back to school. She was late that day, and that impressed the incident on her mind. Young as she was she never forgot it.

On Saturday sometimes, as a great treat, her father would take her with him on a tram, perhaps to watch a football match, and she sat on his shoulder or stood

between his knees, looking at everything in her queer grave way, but never saying a word. At other times, the neighbour's child who brought her home from school would take her on to the Green. This girl, Alice, was only about thirteen, but she seemed to Emma to be quite grown up. There were always two babies in a perambulator who formed part of the group, and generally several other children as well. Sometimes Alice would unfold a very dirty pocket handkerchief and show a piece of bread, a few sweeties, or a bit of apple, and they would have a feast, running to the drinking fountain at the end of the Green to fill a bottle so that they could have water to drink with it. In all the parks and open spaces in London there are drinking fountains provided, and at any time in the day they are generally surrounded by a group of children. Some of them are very pretty—for instance, that in St. James's Park.

Once a rough boy knocked Emma down in running past, and Alice flew at him, and boxed his ears and thumped him until he stood whimpering with his face on his arm leaning against a tree. Emma felt sorry for him, and, sidling up to him, thrust the bit of apple which had fallen to her share into his grubby little hand. Even as a tiny child she always loved giving things to people.

These were happy days, but as the years went on worse times came. Emma's father took to drink and lost his work, and they moved into a dark back room which only cost half-a-crown a week. He used to get drunk now whenever he had any money, and then have

fearful rows with his wife, who was quite as strong as he was and hit him back. These scenes terrified Emma. She would hide her head under the pile of soiled bed-clothes and lie as still as a little mouse.

Her boots were in holes, her clothes were in rags, and she was no longer the chubby little thing she had been. This was partly because she was growing up, and her arms and legs were lengthening out very fast. One day, when she was at school, she felt quite queer all of a sudden, and rolled off her form on to the floor, and when she came round she found the teacher bending over her and wiping her face with a wet handkerchief. In answer to the teacher's questions, Emma confessed she had had no breakfast at all that day, and only a bit of bread the night before. Now, at this school there were free dinners given to children whose parents could not afford to feed them properly.

Some parents paid a penny when they were able, and others nothing at all, and when it was ascertained that poor little Emma was really starving for want of food, she was allowed to have dinner at the school for nothing. How good those dinners were! One day there would be thick soup and suet pudding with treacle; another day perhaps meat and potatoes and other vegetables; and on another, fish and roly-poly pudding. The children loved the treacle and jam better than the meat.

One day a terrible thing happened to Emma, who was in the room alone at home, for her mother was out washing some doorsteps, by which she earned a little

money to keep herself and the child, and pay the rent. Suddenly Emma's father came in drunk. He knew that his wife had hidden a small sum of money away for the rent, which had to be paid the next day, and he asked Emma to tell him where it was. She answered, trembling all over, that she did not know; then he seemed to go mad, and struck at her as he had often struck at her mother, and she rushed out of the house wild with terror. She thought he was chasing her, and she ran down the little street and out into the big broad one, over which her father had so often led her safely to school, and, never looking where she went, she dashed headlong across it. Then there was a shout and a whirr and a great crash, and she knew no more.

When she opened her eyes at first she thought she was dreaming, and then she thought she had died and gone to heaven, where angels in white caps were flitting about, and last of all she felt very miserable, and oh! so lonely, and she began to cry. Someone was leaning over her in a moment, and a bright voice told her to cheer up: she would be all right; she was in hospital now, and would be well looked after. Poor little Emma was in great pain and felt very stiff, but she soon fell asleep again, and when she woke next time she was not so frightened. She was in a big ward with a polished floor, and a row of large windows through which the sun shone. Down both sides were little beds with bright scarlet counterpanes, and in each was a child. Some were quite tiny, mere babies, and the others of all sizes; but the older ones were girls, the boys were small.

Emma had to stay a long time, and during the weeks that she was there she got to know the children, and felt quite sorry when one or another was well enough to go away home ; but most of all she loved the babies, and it was a great treat when she was wheeled round the ward in a chair and could stop at the foot of each crib and talk to the funny little babies, who held out tiny, wasted hands to her. The nurses were very kind, and they were all called by the same kind of name ; there was Nurse Grace, and Nurse Mercy, and Nurse Faith, and Nurse Charity, and so on. Nurse Grace was the one Emma liked best, and it was Nurse Grace who broke to her one day the news that she would never be able to walk on two legs like other children again, but always have to use a crutch. At first Emma could not understand it : it seemed impossible, and she cried ; but it was just about Christmas-time, and the ward was so nicely decorated, and there was so much excitement about the Christmas-tree, that she quickly forgot her troubles.

The tree was wonderful ! Never in her life had she seen anything so beautiful. It seemed to reach right up to the ceiling, and was seen in a radiant white light thrown by countless little candles. Here and there some curious things fizzed, throwing out jets of glorious flame which sparkled on all the gold and silver and red and blue things which dangled from the tree. There was a present for each child, and Emma got a doll more beautiful than she could ever have imagined, and she cried out to Nurse Grace, "Oh ! can't I stay here till next Christmas ?"

But it was not to be ; she had to go out into the world again, and take up her life, carrying with her a crutch which would be her companion throughout life.

When she got home, what a surprise awaited her! Her parents had moved into a new room, which was lighter than the old one, and it all looked so clean Emma could hardly believe it was theirs. Her father had got work again, and had been so frightened by the accident to his only child that he had taken the pledge and kept straight all the time she was in hospital. So prospects looked better for Emma, but the one thing that really interested her was, Could she go to school again ? She was only eight years old, and she knew so little that she wanted to learn much more. Her parents did not see how it could be managed, because, besides the difficulty of her getting backwards and forwards such a long way, she suffered from her back, and had to lie down often, so that she could not have sat on the school bench.

Then one day a lady called, and it was the same lady who had been visiting the Taylors while their child was away, and who had tried to teach the poor, ignorant little mother to keep her house in better order, and to make better meals out of what food she had. And this lady told them that there was a special school for crippled children not far away, and that Emma could go there, and that a carriage—a real carriage with a horse—used to call for the sickly children in the neighbourhood and take them there every day. And it was all true ! The first day Emma saw the carriage with the horse and driver stopping outside her door she felt very grand

indeed, and though in time she became quite accustomed to her glory, it was always a pleasure to her to have the drive.

At the school the children were not pressed ; they were made to lie down, and given easy work ; but Emma was so eager to learn that often they had to take away her books. She stayed on at the school all the spring, and then a further treat came her way. She heard that in the summer a certain number of children were sent away into the country for a fortnight, and that they must pay a small sum in pence every week until they went, so she begged her mother to let her try for this. Mrs. Taylor agreed, and henceforth there was no girl more regular in bringing her pennies week by week than Emma.

The pennies did not pay for going away, they only went a very little way towards it, but the kind people who contributed to the fund thought that if the poor children paid something themselves it would show they were in earnest in wanting to go, and that they would value it more. The whole of the schooling was, of course, free: Emma's parents had never paid a penny for it ; the hospital, too, was quite free, and she had had the best doctors in London—doctors and surgeons that well-to-do people would have had to pay for very highly ; and now she was to be sent away to the country for only a very small payment, so it can be seen that London looks after its poor and helps them in many ways, and that any man who is steady and honest gets great advantages in bringing up his children.

When the time to go to the country came, Emma

could not sleep the night before, she was so excited ; never had she been in the country, and the only trees she had seen were the Christmas-tree at the hospital and the trees in the London streets and squares. Once, it is true, her father had taken her to Hampstead Heath on a Bank Holiday, but they only went a very little way on to the heath, and the place was so crowded with people, swinging on merry-go-rounds, waving balloons, and shooting at ranges, that it seemed more like a market than anything else.

We will have just one last picture of Emma, sitting in a field, leaning against a haycock and laughing merrily at the antics of the farmer's two little children who were playing with a puppy. It was just time for tea, and it was a very happy, active little girl who got up with her crutch and went at a good pace over to the gate and down to the little cottage where she was staying. The cottage was covered with roses, and there was a table spread with jam and good bread and butter and tea, and such an appetite had Emma got with being out so much that she felt quite ashamed of herself ! She made up her mind that every year so long as she was young enough she would save up her pennies and go to the country, and no matter how dark the London life seemed at times she could always now shut her eyes and think of Molly and Teddy and funny little Scamp, and imagine she smelt again the dog-roses in the hedge and the honeysuckle by the bridge.

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CHAPTER VIII

PLAYGROUNDS AND PARKS

If you were told you could play in a graveyard, you would not be very grateful for the permission, would you? Yet many London children are only too glad to have even such a playground. I will take you to visit one. We must walk through some rather dingy streets, until presently, at the back of some houses, we see an iron railing with a gate in it. The gate is open and leads to a narrow strip of ground lying between tall houses. The ground is not much larger than a fair-sized room, and there is a flagged path down the middle, with some rather worn grass on each side, where stand two or three seats, and a few grimy shrubs grow here and there.

"But that is not a graveyard," you will object; "where are the graves?"

The graves are all levelled down and smoothed over, and what headstones there were have been removed. See, they stand up against the wall at the far end. You can notice the lettering on them still, though it is much worn.

Once upon a time the graveyard belonged to a church which has now quite disappeared. It then was considerably larger than it is now, for when the houses were built they encroached upon it and made it smaller. It was a wonder that they did not grow over it altogether! Before a law was passed forbidding any

burials within the City, the church was used for funerals, and the bodies were buried in the graveyard. As generations went on these little pieces of ground got so filled up with bones that the gravediggers had to turn them out in heaps to make way for the new coffins. Sometimes they burnt the bones in handfuls, and pieces of the rotten wood of the coffins too, which was very horrible.

But that state of things has long ceased ; no one now is buried here. The mould lies thickly over the bones of those who sleep, and the place is quite healthy. A Society, called the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association, sees that these places are kept in good repair, and that seats are provided and shrubs planted, so as to make a quiet little corner where children can at all events play undisturbed. Many children come here from the poor houses around. They do not play noisy games, but sit about and make-believe with a rag for a doll ; though the poor have no need of dolls, for there is nearly always a real baby of the party. Sometimes an older girl will seat herself on the edge of a flat table-like tomb, and play at keeping school, with the younger ones for a class ; but in the long hot days when happier children are away in the country, these poor little ones sit about listlessly with white faces and do nothing but watch the cheeky sparrows, who always seem to flourish whoever else does not.

At every big London school, where it can be managed, there is a great asphalt playground, where children can run about and amuse themselves. Sometimes there are swings, or a rope is tied to a post, so that they can swing

around it; but it is rather dull, for though asphalt makes a good dry footing, it is not so pleasant for running about on as the grass. London children, however, are quite accustomed to it, for their usual playground is the street, and they think themselves lucky if they can get a street, called a "cul-de-sac," that leads nowhere, so that they are not in danger from the traffic. On the pavements you will see little girls with squares marked out by chalk for hopscotch. They hop on one foot, kicking a piece of stone from one square to the other until it reaches "London Town," which is the goal in the top square of all. Skipping-ropes, too, are loved by girls, who often tie one end to a lamp-post and swing the other across the pavement, quite regardless of the passers-by; but they cannot skip in the roadway, and have nowhere else, so the passers-by, knowing this, are generally good-tempered. Boys prefer roller-skates, and seem to like them best one at a time, though that may be from necessity, not choice. They dash about in the most astonishing way, seldom coming to grief. At certain seasons of the year every boy manages to procure a top somehow, and does his best to split every other boy's top by sending his own down on it with force while it is spinning.

On November 5, Guy Fawkes' Day, both boys and girls go round in hideous masks carrying stuffed figures and begging for pennies to spend on fireworks.

The parks are by far the best playgrounds for children, and they are so big that rich and poor can play together without annoying one another. Still, it is not every child who is so fortunate as to live near a park.

The most important of all is the great stretch of green known as Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens. The two are really one piece only divided by a long tongue of water called the Serpentine. On the Serpentine there are many boats for hire, and the water is not so deep anywhere as to be dangerous. In the very early mornings men and boys are allowed to bathe in the Serpentine, and there are some who have done it year by year on all the coldest mornings, even in the depths of winter, when the ice has to be broken. Sometimes, indeed, the ice is so thick that skating is allowed, but this does not happen often. The Serpentine affords endless amusement even to those who do not go in boats. There are quaint-looking ducks and wild-fowl of various breeds to be fed, and on Sundays the whole of dog-land seems to gather there, yelling and barking and plunging after the sticks thrown into the water. Also toy boats may be sailed, but the Round Pond is the best place for that. The Round Pond is right in the middle of Kensington Gardens, and very round it is. There are ducks here also, and sometimes in the evenings, as the dusk is settling down, and the weird cries of the keepers, calling the people out before the gates are shut, resound echoing through the place, you will hear a whirr, and suddenly a string of little ducks will fly out of nowhere and alight on the water as gently as thistledown !

But the glory of the Round Pond is in its toy sailing-boats, and these are brought here not only by children, but by grown-up men too—huge craft some of them, and most elaborately made. There are times when the Pond seems to be covered with a flock of swans, so

closely set are the white sails. The wind generally is strong enough to take the boats across, but sometimes one gets becalmed or water-logged, and lies helplessly in the middle, so the luckless owner has to leave it with an aching heart because he cannot get it, as there are no big boats that humans can use on the Round Pond. Perhaps he knows he must go to school next day, and that he can only send a nurse or footman to regain his treasure, and meantime it may drift to the edge in the night and be taken away by some other boy. There are many tragedies at the Round Pond!

Not so very far from the Pond a real playground has been made for the children of the poor. Here a piece of ground is fenced off, and within it very strong swings are provided, and, what is a very peculiar feature, a great bed of sand is laid out for the children to dig in; but it is not like the seashore, for there is no water to fill the trenches around the sand-castles, and no clean tide to sweep in and make all smooth again when the little toilers have left. Into this delightful place boys over fourteen are not admitted, for it is feared they would be too rough and rude, hurting the little ones, and girls over sixteen are similarly barred out. It is rather sad to see some small boys, who have just reached the age-limit, standing looking into Paradise with wistful eyes.

In Kensington Gardens there are many trees and plenty of grass, and at one end is Kensington Palace, where Queen Victoria was born and lived as a little girl.

Hyde Park is not so pleasant as the Gardens, but it has its own attractiveness too. There are wide spaces

of open grass, and often soldiers are drilled here, and camps are sometimes made, as at the funeral or the coronation of the King. Very often in the morning you will see a battalion of the Foot Guards marching round looking like a great white-bodied centipede with black legs, because the men wear short white shell-jackets and dark trousers. There are roads for driving and cycling, whereas one can only walk in the Gardens. There is also a soft road all round the Park for riders, and most interesting it is to see them, both men and women, in the early mornings coming out to take exercise. Some of the ladies and nearly all the little girls now ride astride, and gain a much safer and better-balanced seat that way. Part of the track made of soft earth for the riders is called Rotten Row, a strange name for the most fashionable ride in the Kingdom ! It is supposed to come from Route du Roi, or the King's Road, as only the King could drive along it if he wanted to, which isn't likely !

If you crossed over from the south-west corner of Hyde Park you would come in a moment to the Green Park, which is joined to St. James's Park, just as Kensington Gardens are joined to Hyde Park.

The Green Park borders Piccadilly, and the stately club-houses in that most fashionable street look out upon its trees and grass. In St. James's Park there is a space railed off for the use of children alone, but there are no swings or amusements provided, and there is a very pretty piece of ornamental water, but no boats may be sailed on it. Consequently, St. James's is not nearly so popular among the children as its larger

neighbour. However, the birds on the water are far more interesting, for they include all sorts of strange and beautiful kinds, and there are stands holding pictures of them to show what their names are. These birds make their nests on the islands, and rear young ones. You can see the stupid-looking pelicans with their enormous bills, and graceful, slender-legged herons, and a great variety of gulls and ducks, all very much at home.

At one end of the park is Buckingham Palace, a large and plain building, which is the London home of the King. You have heard of the Tower, and Westminster, and Whitehall, which were each in turn the King's palace, as Buckingham Palace now is. On another side of the park is St. James's Palace, the site of which we know Henry VIII. took from the leprous sisters. But this is not now occupied by royalty ; instead of that, Marlborough House opposite, which once belonged to the famous Duke of Marlborough, is used as the second London home of royalty, and if there is a Prince of Wales who wants a separate house during the lifetime of his father, he usually inhabits it ; just at present it is used by the Queen-mother.

The third of the best-known parks of London is Regent's Park, which lies northward. The attraction it offers does not rest wholly with the fine strip of ornamental water on which live numerous black swans, or with its most beautifully laid out flower borders, but in something quite peculiar to itself. I wonder if any stranger child could find out what it is.

We are walking along a broad path lined by bushes

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of fuchsias, so high that they are like trees, and masses of geranium so vivid that they make one blink, when suddenly, hopping along the grass edge toward us in the demurest manner, with his big bushy tail well extended behind, is a little grey squirrel. He sits up on his hind-legs for one minute, glancing at us out of his bright black eyes, and we see that he holds a nut in his wee claws. Presently, jumping on to the mould, he neatly buries the nut, poking the soil over it with his nose, and then quite fearlessly dances away again. Immediately we prod the nut up with the end of an umbrella, and throw it after him. Whereupon he stops and considers it with a slightly puzzled expression: "Dear me," he says, "how abundant nuts are to-day! Here is another, just after I have buried one so carefully. I cannot possibly eat it, so I must bury it too, otherwise it would be wasted." At least, we gather that is what he would say if he could speak, for he sets to work and buries the nut again. He will never come to find it; in five minutes he will have forgotten all about it. But this is an instinct inherited from generations of wild ancestors who lived in the woods and made a storehouse of nuts close by their nests, so that when the starving time of winter came they should have enough. Even in those days squirrels were not always wise, and they frequently buried nuts where they could not find them again; but that was what Nature wanted, for there the nuts lay snug and warm in the soil until the husk rotted and little green seedlings began to push out, to grow into trees in years to come. So the squirrel was quite right; the nut he

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buried would not be wasted. He, however, has nothing to fear from the winter, for he is well fed by the keepers all the year round.

You will be wondering how he gets here at all—how it is such a wild little creature can be found living in a park in the middle of London. Ah! there lies the secret. At the north end of the park there is a large part fenced in, and this is the famous Zoo, beloved of everyone who observes Nature and the beautiful world. Here are kept animals whose native lands are in all parts of the globe. We can find every species, from tall, patchy-coloured giraffes, who love the wide plains and the torrid heat, to huge, white, grumbling polar bears who yearn for the steely blue skies and shimmery ice of the Arctic regions.

It is, of course, impossible to make the climate hot or cold to suit each creature, but everything that can be done to make their captivity pleasant to them is done, and, at all events, they never have to suffer the gnawing pangs of hunger, as all great beasts must do sometimes when living in the wild. It is from the Zoo that the squirrel came, and there are plenty more inside running wild over the grass-plots.

A few years ago the subscribers, called Fellows, who keep the Zoo and manage it, wished to take in a bit more of the park, for they had not room to house their valuable animals properly. This was a serious matter, because the parks belong to the nation, and cannot be interfered with lightly. The subject was discussed in Parliament, and at length permission was given on condition that certain paddocks should be made lining

the park, and separated from it only by iron railings, so that anyone could see the animals living in them without having to go round to the entrance-gate and pay for admission. Therefore anyone, however poor, can now watch the beautiful graceful gazelles, or the thick-set buffaloes, or other creatures who are kept in these paddocks, and can also get a peep beyond to the fierce wolves seated on their little huts, well caged in, or the wild birds flying high in the great open-air aviary.

Besides those mentioned, there are many other parks in London; one, Victoria Park, is in a very poor district in the East End. There are pretty shrubs and flowers, and the bit of water which no London park is complete without; and besides this, there are fine spaces of grass for cricket and other games. Another park, Battersea, is also in a poor part, on the south side of the river, but close to a very fashionable and expensive part, for it faces Chelsea across the water. On Saturday afternoons in summer Battersea is given up to cricket. Standing on a little knoll at one end, you can see cricketers of every sort and size, from the tiny urchin —who has put his ragged coat over a stick to make a wicket, and is batting with a piece of flat wood, in a tattered shirt and trousers, far too wide, and plainly cut down from "father's"—to the well-set-up young man, in white flannels, who is playing for a club on a specially kept ground. The balls fly all around, often dropping right into the middle of another game, and it is wonderful that the players themselves don't make mistakes and run to the wrong wicket in their excitement.

So you see, what with the parks and the graveyards,

and all the numerous patches of grass which are open to children in London, generally the very poorest can find some playground. One of the oddest is, perhaps, the playground of the boys belonging to the choir at St. Paul's Cathedral. There is no grass near for them, and no open space, for in the City land is most valuable, so a playground has been made on the flat roof of the school, and this is closed in with wire-netting, so that cricket or football can go on merrily, without danger to the passers-by. It must be a little smutty up there among the chimneys, but it is certainly better to have this space than nothing.

Not far from the British Museum is a garden belonging to the Duke of Bedford, and the Duke allows the crippled children of a special school near to use this garden, so they can go hopping about on their crutches, or sit under the great shady trees on the grass. Very few, even of the richest children, have such a garden in London.

All around London, the farther out we go the larger are the open spaces preserved for the use of the people, never to be built upon. The finest of all are Putney Heath and Wimbledon Common, which run on all in one piece in the south-west, and Hampstead Heath in the north on the heights above London. In both, the natural appearance of the ground is preserved ; there are heights and hollows, trees and shrubs and bushes, all naturally growing ; there is nothing stiff or park-like about them. On Bank Holidays the ground is simply covered with people who cannot afford to go farther, but come here to picnic and enjoy themselves.

Farther still are Kew Gardens and Richmond Park, but these lie right outside London, and take some time to reach.

CHAPTER IX

SUPPLIES AND GOVERNMENT

Even in the very earliest days, when rude men settled on the cliff overhanging the Thames, they must have made some rules among themselves as to conduct, and from that day to this the government of London has grown and grown, passing through many different forms.

In the old Saxon days the citizens used to meet at Paul's Cross, when the great bell clanged out to warn them some matter concerning the City was to be discussed, and then suggestions were made to them, while every man cried "Ay" or "Nay," and the voting was done by show of hands, a rough-and-ready method. But as London grew it became impossible for all to meet at one place, and the voting had to be done in a more orderly way. So that now the manner of government within the City is this: Every citizen—that is to say, every man holding property in, or otherwise belonging to, the City, has a vote in electing a representative, who is called an alderman. The City is divided into wards, which are to the whole as the counties are to England, and every ward has one alderman. The aldermen form the parliament of the City. From them are selected two sheriffs, and each year one of these sheriffs becomes

Lord Mayor. As you have heard, the Lord Mayor holds office for one year only, and then retires. But a man who has been Lord Mayor can still continue to be an alderman. This parliament, with the Lord Mayor at the head, is called the Corporation of the City, and decides all matters relating to the City. Of course, all parts of London are subject to the common law of the land, but matters of government, the internal management of the City and the well-being of the citizens, are in the hands of the Corporation. In 1899, all the rest of London spreading out around the City was divided into boroughs, which also may be compared with counties, and each borough has its own mayor and aldermen, though there is only the one *Lord* Mayor, and he is the head of the City. Still, in their own way the newly formed boroughs are a copy of the City government, and the members of the council have to see that the condition of the streets is good, that the food of the people is of fair quality and in good condition. They must allow no diseased meat or bad milk to be sold. The Borough Councils are elected by the votes of the householders in each borough.

You must think of London, therefore, as being one great area divided into a number of smaller ones, called boroughs, and in the middle of all the City, which is itself divided into wards. It is, of course, in practice a little less simple than this, and there are other points to be considered ; but as this is only a peep at London, we must be content to get a general idea of the whole.

The whole—yes, that is what we must now consider, for besides all these divisions, is there not one central

authority which looks after London as a whole? Certainly there is.

Since 1888 the geography of England has been a little altered. If you learn geography now, you will be taught that there are fifty-three counties in England, whereas when I was young I learned that there were only fifty-two, but since then London has been made into a county by itself. As London spread so far into the counties on all sides, taking a bit of Middlesex and a bit of Surrey, Essex, and Kent, there arose difficulties between the persons responsible for these counties and those who governed London, so it was thought simpler to draw a line round the greater part of London and call that a county by itself, and this county covers about one hundred and seventeen square miles, whereas the City covers only one square mile. At that time each county was being put under a new government called a County Council, and so the county of London had a council to itself too. The population living in London numbers about the same as the population of the whole of Scotland or the whole of Ireland, or, more amazing still, the population of Australia and New Zealand added together.

Each borough, besides choosing its own council, sends up a member to the County Council, and these members are not chosen by the borough councillors, but by all the householders in the borough. The County Council manages certain things for the whole of London, except the City. It manages the schools, and the fire-engines, and the asylums, and licensing theatres, and the housing of the working classes, and many other things which are

better done as a whole rather than in scraps by each Borough Council. But the police are not under the County Council. They are managed by the State, excepting within the City, which manages and pays its own police. If you notice at any time the little striped badge which a policeman wears on his left arm while on duty, you will see it is a blue-and-white stripe for greater London, and a red-and-white stripe for the City.

There are many things which no one citizen can do for himself, and yet which make an enormous difference to his comfort and health—such things as the lighting of streets, good quality of food, safety in the erection of buildings, and so on—and these are now all managed for him by the representatives he elects to the Councils.

Of all these things, perhaps the food-supply is the most important for a huge town like London. It is quite easy to see that we don't grow corn in the streets, and that we cannot fatten cattle on the grass growing there. We know that every atom of food that London eats has to come in from outside, and if we could imagine an army camped all around cutting us off from supplies it would take at the most a few days before the stores in the shops were eaten up and people began to starve. Vast quantities of food come up the river, as we have already seen ; other supplies come from all quarters by rail, and others, again—mostly greenstuffs, vegetables, etc.—come in by cart from the not very far away country.

There must, of course, be great distributing centres where these supplies are received in the mass, and from whence they are carried away again to the shops, and

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we find these in the large markets. The principal of these are the meat and poultry and general markets at Smithfield, the vegetable and flower market at Covent Garden, and the fish-market that we have visited at Billingsgate, though, of course, there are many others too, such as Leadenhall Market in the City and the Borough Market across the river. So you see London is looked after as carefully as a house is by a good housekeeper.

THE END

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